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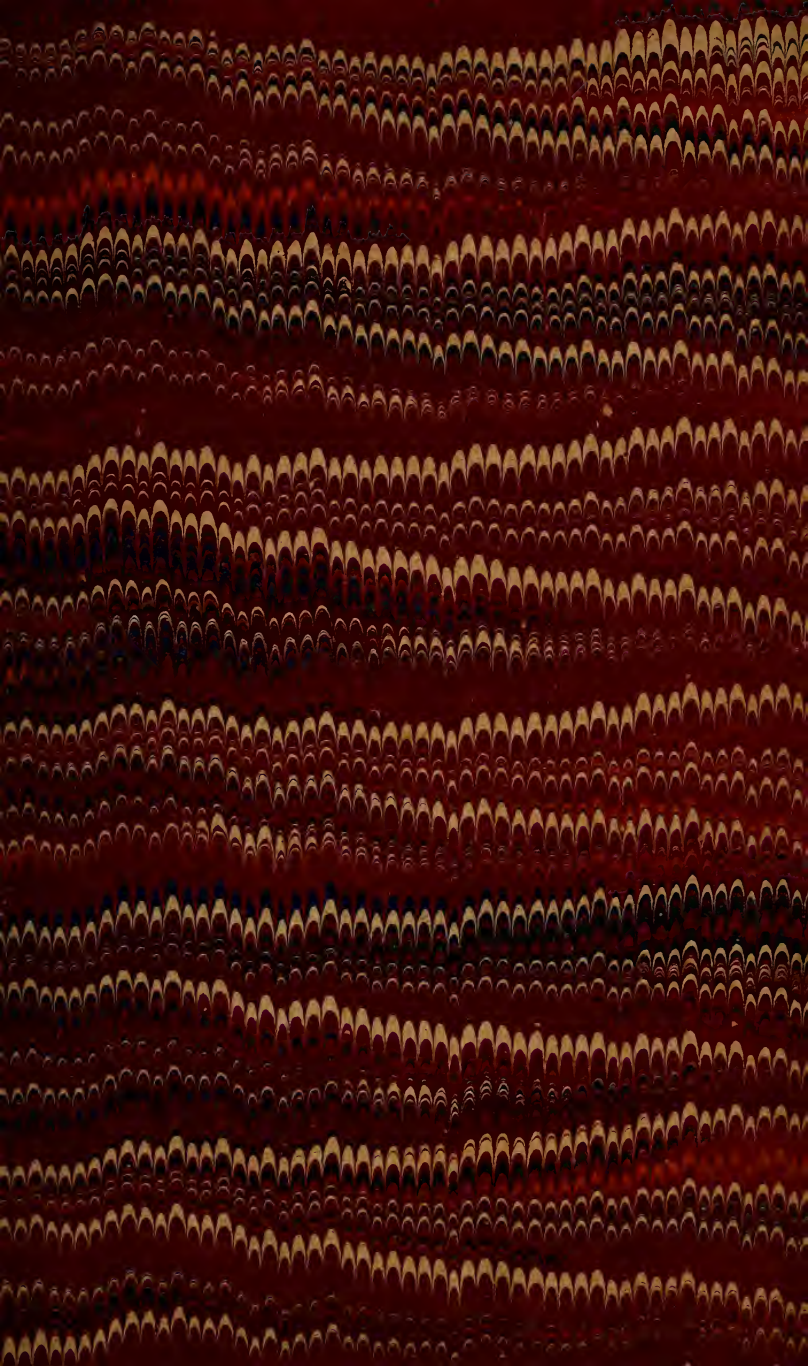
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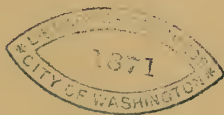
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H E S T E R,

THE BRIDE OF THE ISLANDS:

A POEM.

BY SYLVESTER B. BECKETT.



PORTLAND:
BAILEY & NOYES.

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INTRODUCTION.

GONE, gone forever — and well gone, perchance —
Are the blithe days when wandering troubadour
In camp and castle sang the deft romance,
'Midst din of warlike strife or wassail roar ;
Yet, maugre that those roistering days be o'er,
And prosier times and plainer themes require
Our notice — howsoever we deplore
Their wealth of myth and pageant to inspire
Our dreams, still are there those devoted to the lyre!

Thus have I from life's highways turned aside,
A stranger, little trained in song to tune ;
Who ne'er have dreamed by Mincio's classic tide,
Or climbed Parnassus ; or held soul-commune
With old-time bards ; or aped the sandal shoon
Which wandering minstrel marked, and gleeman vest,
And hence may scarce show patent for the boon

Of poesy — yet am I oft impressed
With idyl, type, and rhyme, which will not let me rest !

I wander on lone islands where the waves
Press shoreward, plumed with foam, in march sublime ;
The unconquered billows ! — tramping to the staves
Of the loud-piping breezes, and the chime
Of their own clashing cymbals, and the rhyme
Of the Almighty, in embattled reach ;
My soul to their wild music keepeth time,
And pains for power to stamp the thoughts they teach
With score indelible, on scope of mortal speech !

So in the unsunned forest's aisles of shade —
Tired of life's fret and turmoil without end,
I fly the ways of mankind, and invade
Their dreamy haunts, and the great trees extend
Their broad palms down to greet me as a friend
Most loving, and where'er I turn I hear
As 'twere the quest, Interpret us ! lend, lend
Your written tongue ! — in soul speech, yet as clear
As though an angel's trump had pealed it on the air !

The mountains draw up their huge chests, and talk

Grand words whose gist there needs not helps to know ;
The streams that leap their mural cliffs, or walk
In calmer mood the deep ravines below,
To meet me ; and the embattled crags that throw
Their shadows o'er the wild glens, and make night
Eternal in their depths — responsive, slow,
But eloquent of speech, all prompt to write
The ways of inner life, as they would fain indite !

And even in the maelstrom rush and roar
Of life along the teeming thoroughfares
Of the great mart of trade forevermore —
Wrung out as 'twere from all its busy cares
And toils, its misery, pomp, parade, and prayers,
And desolations, echoes far and lone
The voice ventriloquous, and often shares
My hours of thought, the spirit-undertone
Of all combined, to urge like service on me prone !

By night ! by day ! Merged in the rush of men,
Or in the solitude ; in toil, in ease —
Come these weird promptings ; from the lonely glen,
The grassy meadow weltering in the breeze,
The wood-girt lake wherein the cloudlet sees

Itself reflected ; from the sterile plain, .
The flowers, the birds, the countless harmonies
Of nature ! — All things, vast or seeming vain —
All have their voices, all join in the ceaseless strain !

Write ! write ! The impulse haunts me as the wind
The gateway of some deeply-sunken bend
Of rugged alpine pass — what comes to mind
Write ! and with converse we will interblend
Your hours of thought, and when your song is penned,
Cast it upon life's hurrying stream to ride
The jostling current, whitherward it wend,
And patiently, without disquiet bide
The issue — only thus shalt thou be satisfied !

Hence have I sung ; and now I fling my thought
As prompted, on the wild, tumultuous stream ;
What of it hath poetic worth, if aught,
Has haply come of Nature — here a gleam
From some external phase, anon a dream
Of inspiration ! Give it praise or blame,
Or pass it without comment, as may seem
To you most meet ; with me 'tis all the same ;
I hymn because I must, and not for greed of fame !

BOOK FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

FAR in the North, whose vigorous clime
And wintry storms have been the theme
Of many a satire, from all time
With those who only love to dream
Of never-ceasing tropic heats,
There is a broad and sheltered Bay,
Begemmed with islands, green retreats
That 'neath the deep-skied summer day,
Gleam o'er the wave with lone array
Of towering forests, rocky steeps,
Green dunes and dells, and glimmery sweeps
Of sand beach — grooved with cove and creek
Where weary fisherman may seek
For shelter from the storm ; hence sprung
The name of CASCO which it bears,

Importing in the Indian tongue
A resting place from toils and cares !

Of all these isles, for many a league,
When first the European came
To their wild shores for greed or game,
None was more beauteous than Chebeague ;
And here, despite the red-man's frown,
One of the hated Saxon race
Had made himself a dwelling place —
Afar from fortalice or town,
Where he might succor find at need ; —
His very recklessness to heed
The wily savages indeed,
Upon their natures won, and gave
His word, or look, a power to save,
Afar and near, whate'er the strait,
Winning at least respect from hate.

And otherwise, his well-knit form,
Tall and erect, his eye of fire,
Keen as the eagle's roused to ire,

His visage swart with sun and storm,
His firm, proud step, his iron nerve
That ne'er from danger cared to swerve,
Were traits to win on their good will
As well as on their fears ! And still
Was there about his ways an ease,

A grace of port, which spoke of power
'Midst the refined to sway and please —
Perchance in many a foregone hour,
In senate hall or lady's bower
Displayed. However this might be,
None seemed to know his history !

'Twas deemed he sought to cloak his mind,
So little did he seem inclined
To speech — while not the evening wind
In its soft utterances more mild ! —
And with the Indians he was styled,
Sententiously, The Silent Tongue !

Yet when occasion called, so clear
And keen his accents stung the ear,
They seemed electrical ; among

The hosts of battle's fierce array,
Where thickest centered the affray,
They would have won implicit sway,
And hurled the staggering squadrons on,
With thunder shock to victory won,
Or turned them back in proud retreat
From decimation or defeat!

So Knox long years thereafter, when
 America with Albion's might
 Was pitched in desperation's fight,
With thunder voice controlled his men —
Though in the battle's sulphurous pall
Wrapped from his eye, when bugle call
Had sounded oft and shrill in vain,
Amidst the wildering hurricane,
To hurl them onward or restrain —
Controlled, and had the power to wield
O'er all the tumult of the field!

His habitation, staunch and rude,
Accorded with the solitude

And lonely aspects of the wild ;
Its walls the fragrant larch trunks piled
Upon each other, but so hewn

And fitted that the sea-born gale
Oft wont, when nights grew long, to tune

Adown the rocks its spectral wail,
O'er all their surface sought in vain
For chink or interstice, to gain

Admittance with the mournful tale ;
While birch-rind from the neighboring hill,
Stitched and adjusted with a skill
Learnt of the red man, formed a roof
'Gainst all the storms of winter proof !

Wainscot and floors of glabrous deal
Within, did service to conceal
Defects, and give an atmosphere
Of snugness and of homely cheer ;
While round the windows, o'er the door

And stoop, were bits of carvings quaint —
Sea-griffins, ghouls, such as of yore
The ship-wright loved to carve or paint,

To deck some favorite craft — debris,
Which, haply years long, coursing o'er
The winding currents of the sea,
At length were borne to this far shore ;
And marking them, the thoughtful mind
Was led unconsciously away
To ponder what strange haps combined
To beach them in this lonely bay !

Whence did they come ? In what far land
Was fashioned by the builder's hand
The stately vessel they bedecked ?
In what strange quarter was she wrecked ?
Was it beneath the sweeping wave
That lashed some bleak and dreary coast
Of arctic wilds, long tempest tost,
Her wildered sailors found their grave —
Where mankind shun to make a home,
Her timbers strewed the breakers' foam ?
Or was it on the southern main,
While wrestling with some hurricane,
That iron bolt and oaken grain

Gave way? Or were her ribs of oak
Crushed inward by the lightning's stroke,
In some unlooked-for gust, where none
Might hear her booming signal gun?

Or does the hulk from which were torn
These fragments, rude and tempest worn,
Still on the lonely billows ride,
Wherever gale or currents guide —
The long sea-mosses from her side
Out-trailing like a mermaid's hair —
Perchance some hideous monster's lair,
That twines his sluggish folds among
Her blackened ribs? or may it be,
In lieu of grosser tenantry,
With some recluse bird of the sea,
Rearing within her ports her young —
Where once the sailor sought his rest,
Watching the lone waste from her nest
With filmy eyes? Such thoughts indeed
Well might these relics quaint suggest
To those who chanced to give them heed.

How strange that watery solitude !

That waste of waves ! where surge and gale —

I sometimes think escaped the pale
Of Nature's laws — hold revel rude,
And roaring on from clime to clime,
Around the lonely world spread wrack
And desolation in their track —
Escaped from law, perchance, what time
The laboring universe gave birth,
'Midst chaos, to the groaning earth !

Such was the Island Home. It stood

Amidst a spacious upland glade
On all sides sheltered by the wood,
Save to the south, where far displayed,
The blue expanse of ocean lay
Lonely and vast, for well-a-day !
In those times rarely did the eye
O'er all the wide a sail descry !

The luxuriant woodbine from the shore

Transplanted, and induced to trail

About the stoop, and eves, and o'er
The windows, with its glossy vail
Of green and crimson, draped from view
What of the work showed want of skill ;
And such wild shrubs and flowers as grew
Among the glens and up the hill —
The golden rod, gay columbine,
Wood sage, blue aster, eglantine,
And crimson fire-weed's plummy stalks,
Disposed along the winding walks,
Gave evidence that woman's care
And beautifying taste, were there.

And thus it was : an only child,
The lovely Hester, was the light
Of this rude cabin of the wild ;
The very desert would have smiled
In such a presence ! yet despite
Her dimpled cheek, her soft blue eye,
Her voice so fraught with music's thrill,
The shrewd observer might espy
The traces therein of a will

That scorned restraint, the soul of fire
That slumbered in her tacit sire.
No less the ocean when at rest,
 In deep mid-summer quiet, mild
 And gentle as a sleeping child,
Bears in the heavings of its breast
The tokens of that fearful power
Which in the storm's triumphal hour,
O'ercomes all strength, mocks all control,
Is of itself the ruler sole !

An Indian girl (Otraska named),
 Possessing all the litheness, grace,
 And strength, which signalized her race
Ere they grew spiritless and tamed —
Of earnest eye, and raven hair
 That flashed about her dusky chest,
Was the companion everywhere
 Of Hester, constantly her guest.

Few with more skillfulness could ply
 The oar than they, or trim the sail ;

The same, when gloomed a windy sky,
And hissing swept the wild wave by,
 As when scarce ruffled by the gale,
The billow slept upon the ledge,
 And hardly the increasing tide
Stirred with its flow the pliant sedge
 That grew upon the inlet's side,
 'Mong which the minnows loved to glide.
Indeed, it was their chief delight,
When combed the far seas feather-white,
To steer out on the roughening bay
With leaning prow and flying spray,
And gunnel ready to submerge
Itself beneath the flashing surge !

The coast and country far and near
 Had they explored ; the solitudes
 Of those interminable woods
That inland swept, where the red deer,
The lordly moose and caribou
Wandered in herds ; the steeps where grew
The beetling pines upon whose crests

The fierce bald eagles built their nests ;
The dark ravines and lonely glens
Where bear and wolf oft had their dens ;
The outer rocky islands nude
 And desert, 'midst whose sedgy shales,
 And crags thrown up by wintry gales,
The gull and gannet reared their brood ;
The inlet and sequestered bay
Where the lithe billow, got astray
From ocean's grasp, came in to play
On the long, listless summer day ;
Each jutting cape, each sandy beach
That fringed the shores in circling reach,
Each sunny valley, sheltered dell —
For many a league they knew full well.

Such were these friends, whose hearts had grown
Accordant, one in beat and tone,
Though so at variance through their life
 Their training ; still those stormy times
Of harsh oppression, wrong, and strife,
 With all their named and nameless crimes,

Prolific as they were of change,
Oft wrought companionship as strange !

The other actors on our stage,
Were two, a dame of middle age
(Good Marjory, the household wife),
And a grave wight whose school of life
Had been perchance the tented field ;

At least he had a soldier's air,
And then the lank and silvery hair
Trained o'er his ample brow, concealed
But partly several sweeping scars,
Such stern chirography as wars
Inscribe ! And e'en though getting old,

There was that in his deep-set eye
And firmly measured stride that told
Of one on whom you might rely
When danger threatened ! In his day
Of strength he would have been detailed
The foremost, where some dread affray
Demanded nerve, when others paled ;
To stand at some weak point assailed,

Or storm some leaguered hold, and cope
With odds where vain seemed even hope !

A sort of chief purveyor he,
Or steward, stout Carl Hildebrand,
Puissant second in command
O'er forces of the sea and land,
All told, as has been seen, the three —
Hester, Otraska, Marjory —
Unless we count a brace of hounds
That followed his accustomed rounds,
Huge-limbed athletes devoid of fear,
Match for those mighty forest deer
The moose and caribou — or still
Distend the tale, and eke include
The veteran anaks of the wood,
Far marshaled over slope and hill,
Firm-footed pine, and beech, and oak,
With thews to dare the thunder stroke —
Here in dark column thickly met,
Yon trailing out upon the plain,
As mustering for some grand campaign ;

Anon like straggling sentries set
Atop some wave-washed parapet ;
With long endurance gray and knurled,
Colossi of a primal world !

But of the chief we're losing sight,
Paul Ravenswood — so was he hight —
 Some hinted, did he so incline,
He might have claimed himself a knight
 Or baron of some famous line
Of far-descended Saxon blood.
There was that, plainly, in his mood
At times, which left room for belief
 He was not what he seemed to be ;
And rankled in his breast some grief
 Of import deep, some mystery
Of woe which he would fain ignore,
But which sometimes swept strangely o'er
 His heart, and shook his iron frame,
And drove the sweat from every pore ;
 And at such times he went and came
Like one who walks in dreams, nor gave

He heed to aught on land or wave ;
As if some kyanized regret
Were in his heart. But in what way
It had the power anew to fret,
And sear, and rankle, none might say.
Still happily these moods were rare —
His not a mind to nurse despair.

CHAPTER II.

THE table of the chieftain — pride
Of good dame Madge, and free as air
To every one who came to share
Its store — was bounteously supplied
The seasons round. The virgin soil
Unstinted gave with little toil
Their bread ; and swarmed the neighboring sea
To yield its kind as lavishly.
The green downs furnished ample feed
For herds and flocks of stalworth breed —
Nor lacked they venison, when the deer
Oft from his forest beats came near,
And browsed and gamboled without fear
Of man — and as to feathered game,
So plenteous was it everywhere,

So little used to gun and snare,
That Marjory had but to name
To Carl the species which she sought,
And as a thing of course 'twas brought !

And long through all the region round,
Did it continue to abound —

Till recent years. — I mind me well

With what delight an aged sire,
In my fond boyhood, used to dwell —

While seated at his winter fire —
Upon the theme ! Chained to my seat,
In his rude cabin, at his feet,
I'd hear him o'er and o'er repeat

The wondrous tales, and never tire :

How in the broomy solitude

At every turn, the ptarmigan
Whirred outward with his startled brood ;
And how the quail, unused to man,
Cowered spell-bound, when the hunter's aim
Made havoc in the hurtling flock ;

How flocked the brant when autumn came,
And black ducks, round each sedgy rock,
And in each lonely nook and bay ;
What flights of pigeons filled the sky,
Darkening like thunder clouds the day
At times, as host on host swept by,
With roar like tempest-ridden seas,
Crushing to earth the bravest trees
Like rushes, in their headlong strife
To settle — storms of feathered life !

How the swan's call notes, clear and lone,
Like hunter's horn remotely blown,
Swept fitfully upon the ear,
When in his migratory flight,
He marked the signs of coming night,
And pausing in his swift career
High o'er the ocean, turned aside
Upon Presumpscot's sedgy tide,
To feed and preen his shattered plumes ;
And how amidst the forest glooms
The timorous partridges would 'bide

The hunter's firelock, stunned, or dazed
With the discharge, as oft he blazed
Upon their covey. —

Such the bent

Of my old friend. With brow o'ersprent
By upwards of a century's snows,
He lay down in his last repose
Long years ago. And not a trace
Of him or his is to be found, —
Hut, sheltering oak, or garden-bound,
Or even of the lowly mound
That marked his final resting place ;
Yet had his tales such charm for me,
That I have never ceased to be
From those days up, and ardently,
A student of the feathered race !

CHAPTER III.

'Twas summer — day was on the wane ;
There had been fitful squalls of rain
And thunder, and the clouds engrailed
And torn, still o'er the ocean trailed
Their sombre robes. A kindred gloom
The elder Ravenswood depressed,
And to and fro he paced his room,
With knitted brow and wild unrest !

A missive lay upon the floor,
With broken seal, the apparent cause
Of this strange mood. A sudden pause —
And seizing it, his eye ran o'er
The contents quickly. “ Even here,”
At length he muttered, “ no escape

From this close net-work ! Must I fear
The demon ever lurking near,

 In some new aspect, some new shape,
Just as success seems gained, to foil
My shrewdest strategy and toil ?
Here in this wild, where all unknown,
I thought in exile to atone
For the sad past ! What madman freak,
What fiend of mischief bade him seek
For us in this obscurity ? —
My brain whirls ! — Hester, was it she ?
But no ! she had none to employ
On such an errand.

 “ Sooth ! the boy
Indites it nobly ! — Generous, high
In purpose — ah ! but knew he why
I shun his presence, how the world
 He paints, of beauty, love, and light,
Would be at once to ruin hurled,
 And chaos intervene, and night !

“ Once I was equally elate

With life and hope — but let that pass ! —
'Tis well we cannot know what fate
Keeps hoarded for us — and alas !
Fond boy ! 'twere better let thee grieve
Awhile in doubt, than to deceive
Thy heart with promise which can ne'er
Be realized ! Thou wouldst come here,
Across the sea, to this far land,
To ask of me my daughter's hand —
Her heart of hearts already thine —
But 'sdeath ! thy suit she must decline,
Though wedded to thy inmost soul ! ” —
And here a shudder o'er him stole —
“ 'Twas well betimes I got this scroll ;
Forewarned, in season we must fly —
Perhaps beneath a fairer sky,
In some far region of the west,
We may find secresy and rest !

“ Or, would it be of more avail
To bide his coming, and the tale
Divulge in full ? — It might be borne,

His rage — but no, not Hester's scorn !
Heaven shield me ! Of her love bereft,
What in this sad world would be left
Worth living for ? ” — and he grew white
As sea foam. — “ What then ? do despite
To all the longings of my heart,
And bid him haughtily depart ;
And counsel Hester upon pain
Of my undying curse, no more
This foolish fondness entertain
For the brave youth ? ” —

Just here the door

Swung open, and the daughter stood
In all the bloom of maidenhood
Before him. “ Father, why that sigh ? ”
She spake — “ what is it clouds thy mind ? —
Why thus so oft to gloom inclined ? —
I too am sad, I know not why —
But something weighs upon my brain,
As if some evil did impend
Above me ! wheresoe'er I wend,
I strive to banish it in vain !

And most perplexing to explain,
At times wild music greets my ear,
Which Madge has vainly sought to hear —
Soul-haunting strains ! Indeed I fear
I know not what, I know not why ! ”
The father fixed his keen, gray eye
Upon the girl, as if to read
Her inmost thoughts — she paid no heed ;
He saw his secret was his own,
And breathed more freely — his alone.

“ I wonder not you seem amazed,”
The girl resumed, “ and deem me crazed !
Strange heavenly music ! fraught with spells
I can’t describe — along the air
It gently breathes, or sinks and swells ;
It fills the heart, is everywhere !
But listen, and it fades and dies,
Like the lark’s carol in the skies
Of our own home-land, when the bird
Sinks in the blue, and can’t be heard —
So gradually I scarce can say

When it has wholly passed away !

“ And then again, I think at times
Perchance the little bell-formed flowers
Upon the cliffs might ring such chimes,
Swung by the zephyrs ; or far showers
Tinkling upon some streamlet, deep,
And girt by sheltering rocks and trees,
That echo to their harmonies ;
Until some sudden, startling sweep
Comes close upon me to confound
The thought ! Then, every object round
In turn seems gifted with the sound !

“ And once those mountains far and lone,
Heaved up against the burning sky,
As their dim summits caught my eye,
Seemed vocal with this phantom tone ;
A troop of golden vapors hung
In slumberous quiet o’er their crest,
And to my brain the fancy sprung,
These were pavilions of the blest,

And that it was their golden lyres
I heard — the songs of angel choirs !

“ Dost know, dear father, of the land
Whence tower those mighty mountains?— Oh,
How often when the west winds blow,
And odors fragrant thence are fanned,
And their lone forms are all aglow
With rose hues, have I longed to know
Of their green vales, their sparkling streams,
Their jeweled caverns, cloud-wreathed peaks,
And deep, wild glens — even in my dreams
The same ! How many days, or weeks
Of travel would it occupy
To reach their confines ? Huge and high
Indeed, of untold height they are,
So like a shadow on the sky
They always rest — and very far !
So mist-like in their dim relief ! —
When I once asked the Indian chief, —
Good Squanto, if his race could tell
About them, he but shook his head,

And turned away, as if with dread ! —
I wonder if of mankind dwell
Among their valleys, calm, and free,
And happy, ignorant of crime
And law ! Sure if there be a clime
Arcadian, as in poesy
Is sung, who knows but it may be
Among those blue, lone steeps, afar
From the world's turbid rush and jar ?

“ But these are fancies, you may say ; —
Not so with this weird music, nay !
Just as I tell thee do I hear,
Distinct, and definite, and clear !
’Tis no chimera of my brain ! ” —
“ Nor do I doubt, but can’t explain ; ”
Returned the parent — “ ’Tis not new
To me that such things are, or seem ;
Thy mother, ere she bade adieu
To earth, as in seraphic dream,
Discoursed of such environment,
Blest visions, soul-entrancing strains,

Which wrapped her being so intent,
That all forgotten were her pains ! —
Some hold such marvels have their source
With dwellers in immortal day,
With whom we may hold intercourse,
The circumstances favoring, may ;
But as to this, I've naught to say.
Man's an enigma — sense, life, breath,
Thought, visions, locomotion, death —
Evolving ever some new phase
His shrewdest student to confound ;
A riddle none have solved, a maze
None can, none ever will expound !

“ I know not but these things are so ;
'Twere well, however, to be slow
To heed, e'en where we think we know ;
But in my wanderings in the East,
I met with earnest, thoughtful men,
Who claimed supernal powers — at least,
The Past and Future to their ken
Seemed as the Present. Like a roll

Well conned my whole life seemed to be,
The secrets of my inmost soul,
To these adepts of mystery !
I sought induction to their rites,
Became as an acolothist
Among them, and weird sounds and sights
Familiar were, till scarce I wist
Myself a being of earth ! But list !
We will not further talk prolong —
The whippoorwill begins his song,
And day has faded from the west —
Thy nerves, it may be, lack for rest ;
Go to thy dreams — the good and true
Have naught to fear — till morn adieu ! ”

She rose and stooped her snowy brow
To meet his kiss, then left the room,
Wondering at his strange mood ; and now
Reverting to the ruthless gloom
That had enthralled his breast before,
Again he wildly paced the floor —
Paced up and down, and to and fro,

Now with quick strides, now lingering, slow —
At length he paused, and muttered — “ No !

She did not read me ; and that tale

Of marvel was of some avail ;

But how escape the threatened blow ?

Should we attempt again to fly,

To seek concealment from this youth,

Is there a land beneath the sky

That would escape his search ? — In truth

’Twere futile ; better far deny

His suit at once ! — It shall be done

Before goes down to-morrow’s sun !

Yes, my poor girl ! however hard

It may be for thee to discard

The stripling, ’tis the last recourse —

But love must seem my guide, not force,

In this proceeding, for full well

I know that once roused to rebel,

No earthly power would serve to quell

Thy spirit. — Now to con my task !

The story to assume, the mask

To cloak my purpose, and conceal

My throbbing heart, come wo, come weal ! ”

And here, aweary of his woes,
The chieftain sank into his chair,
And soon in sleep was lost to care —
Nor did he stir from his repose
Till the red streaks of morning threw
Athwart the dusky room their glow ;
When roused, with measured step and slow,
He sought the dreaded interview ! —
What came thence, 'tis enough to know
That hours thereafter, wrapped in thought
Intense, at times like one distraught,
The pale girl wandered, so intent
On some keen pang, that where she went
She knew not ; yet one faithful friend,
Alert to mark the passion-whirl
That thrall'd her, managed to attend
Unseen her steps, — the Indian girl
Otraska — flitting stealthily,
From rock to rock, from tree to tree ;
Now coming near with breathless hush,

And step so light as scarce to crush
The delicate anemone ;
Now in some long detour with speed
Of the young frightened fawn to fly,
O'er knoll, and rock, and grassy mead,
Yet so as not attract her eye,
But always in a moment nigh !

And Hester, rambling on, at length,
With throbbing brow and failing strength,
Attained a lofty bluff, and sank
O'erwearied on its mossy bank.
It was a cherished spot, a steep
Surmounted by a mighty pine,
That prone above the hissing brine,
Had ages balked the tempest's sweep,
And seemed in its strong boughs to hold
Life-lease of ages yet untold !
Here oft beneath the grateful shade,
In converse with the Indian maid,
Had she the summer evening passed,
Scanning the lone and shadowy vast,

As if to catch some distant mast,
That in its advent still delayed ;
And still and still shunned to appear,
Though sought when other nights drew near !

The cool breeze kissed her fevered cheek,
And tossed, in wantonness and freak,
The brown locks o'er her pearly neck,
And from her bosom loosed the dress
To revel with its snowiness —
A freedom which she did not reck,
Or, conscious of, cared not to check ; —
The billow, scouring up the bay
With lifted crest and fleet career,
Leaped like a thing that seeks its prey,
Above the sunken ledges near,
And belching high its eager spray
Towards her, strove to climb the rough
And shaggy ramparts of the bluff ;
But foiled, retired, reluctant, slow,
And seemed with elfin voice and low,
While swinging back, and to and fro,

To beckon her to seek relief
On its broad bosom, for her grief ;
And pressing near, the sea-born gale
Repeated the alluring tale,
And even the little cliff flowers bent
And beckoned — nodding their assent !
So strongly this illusion grew
Erewhile, that she arose, and drew,
Like as one dreaming, to the verge,
And looked down wistful at the surge,
That seemed all o'er with rainbows dyed,
As for reception of a bride !
She stooped — Otraska to her side
Sprang swift as light, and grasped her arm ;
At once was broke the fearful charm ! —

“ The pale face Hester lacks for rest ; ”

At length the faithful Indian spake —

“ A shadow broodeth on her breast,

The night-storm on the pleasant lake ! ” —

“ Storm ! sayst thou ? — shadow ! — these pass by

And leave a fairer, bluer sky ;

Nay, not a shadow — Oh, my brain !
And then to think from whom the pain ! —

“ Otraska, doth the Indian know
What 'tis to love ? Didst ever feel
Thy pulses bound, thy bosom glow —
A thrill o'er all thy senses steal,
When he approached — the loved and true,
And noble — who e'en rendered you
More of devotion than you gave ?
Such was Lord Hubart, whom I knew
In my far home beyond the wave ;
Fate severed us, — we had to fly
(My parent, wherefore should not I ?)
So suddenly — I scarce know why —
They gave me not a moment's space,
A single farewell line to trace ;
But hurried with a headlong speed
On board a ship ; the winds were free,
And ere I well could think indeed,
We were out on the wide, lone sea.
Four years have vanished since our flight,

Nor from that inauspicious night,
Have I from merry England heard,
Nor of Lord Hubart, even a word ! ”

“ And wherefore does the pale face wait
So long ? Has she not power to send
A token to her absent friend ? ”

“ Yes, but for dread of dubious fate —
'Twas hinted some affair of state
(A thing you scarce can comprehend,
Otraska) bade my father flee ;

And freedom, safety, may depend —
E'en life — upon our secrecy !
And yet sometimes I am in doubt

But that it all refers to me ;
But how or why, cannot make out !

'Tis all a web of mystery —
Ne'er more confounding than this morn,

When with the sun my father came,
Pale and perplexed, and overworn,
As if with some vexed passion torn. —

At last he mentioned Hubart's name —

And when I felt the warm blood flush
My features, as it ever will
At that loved sound, he marked the blush,
As with an agonizing thrill ;
And then what did he, but implore
That I would banish evermore
All thought of Hubart from my heart ! —
Not slow to note my sudden start
At this rude blow — 'twas for my sake,
He wildly urged ; my future rest
And happiness were all at stake
On my assent to this request.

“ In vain I strove the fact to state,
I had not known of Hubart's fate
For years — or if alive or dead —
Indeed, I scarce know what I said —
He only sadly shook his head ;
It seemed to aggravate his pain ! —
And herein seemed his greatest dread,
That I should ask him to explain !
Our words grew warm ; I begged for time

To ponder o'er this seeming freak ;
He plead, 'Twas scarcely less than crime ! —
But said at last, that for a week
Peremptory duties called him hence —
And if at all he must delay,
The time was fixed — my better sense
Meantime would lead me to obey ;
The more as for my weal alone
He urged the prayer, and not his own. —
Then leaving, with a kind caress,
So fond, and yet beseechingly,
I could but pity his distress,
Whilst mine own had no sympathy —
Resolved, perplexed, elated, sad,
By turns — this clash will drive me mad ! ”—

“ Hugh ! ” cried the Indian, in reply,
Whilst limbs, nor breath, nor tawny skin —
Naught but her fixed and lustrous eye,
Gave token of the heart within —
“ Perhaps dark tidings may have reached
The pale faced sachem of the isle,

Of this young brave ?"—

“ His truth impeached ! ”

Said Hester, with a scornful smile,
“ His fame, his honor doubted — no ! —
Wherefore such mystery if 'twere so ?
I sometimes grasp another thing —
He once gave me a signet ring,
Constructed with a hidden spring
So fixed, none would the ruse suspect,
Or fancying it, could well detect ;
Within its cavity I placed
A word or two minutely traced,
In short, the simple words ‘ STILL TRUE ’ !
And freighted thus, dispatched it hence ;
Who knows but this has had to do,
If wrong has come, with the offense ?
Old Squanto took it on his way
To visit Massachusetts Bay,
Whence furthered it would go by sea ;
I know your kin's fidelity !
He would have answered with his life
Upon its safe delivery !

But this but guesses at the strife
In which I am involved. —

“ Ah me !

My best friend, guard that trustful heart ; —
How ! why that cringe, that sudden start ?
Hast thou seen trouble ? By the nonce !

I hardly had supposed it so.” —
“ Otraska had a lover once ; ”

Quoth the red girl, in voice so low
And mournful, that the listener's breath
Was checked as by the hush of death
To hear — “ the noblest of his race

Was young Cashura — as the oak
For strength, the slender fir for grace ;

The old braves listened when he spoke,
For wisdom beamed upon his face ;

The last was he upon the chase

To tire, the first to track the foe,

And none who dared his vengeful blow

Escaped — yet frank and kind as brave —

The white man's truest friend — he fell !

How, let the white man's rifle tell ! —

I know the pathway to his grave,
In the deep forest where the day
Comes with but dim and timid ray —
I often seek his place of rest,
To strew the wild flowers on his breast.”—
“ Sad tale ! ” said Hester, as with awe ;
 “ Otraska must have felt the sting
 Of anguish, deep and withering —
My kin have much to answer for ! ”—
“ The Indian girl did suffer grief ! ”
Was the response — “ she loved her chief ! —
And dearly has the white man paid
For life so heartlessly betrayed ! ”

The English maiden’s blood ran chill
At these last measured words, but still
With calmness she essayed to speak —
“ I too Cashura’s grave will seek
With the red girl.”— Otraska shook
Her head despondent ; yet her look
Showed untold thanks, as she replied,
“ No, lady ! evil would betide —

His spirit might be grieved, I fear,
Should foot of pale face venture near ;
Otraska hither goes to moan,
And chant the song of death, alone ! ”

Heart-stricken, Hester turned away
To hide the tears she could not stay ;
“ Thus for my countrymen’s sad deeds ! ”
At length she murmured — “ from such seeds,
A harvest choked with noxious weeds
Wherefore not readily foretell ? —

Otraska ! they belie thy race,
Who say that gentle thoughts ne’er dwell
With such — beneath that frigid face
A wealth of feeling lies concealed,
Which, goaded into angry mood,
Might gloat in treachery and blood ;
But fostered properly, would yield
The kindlier virtues in such store,
As earth had never known before ! ”

CHAPTER IV.

A SHOUT ! It was Carl Hildebrand,
Upon the opposite rocky knoll,
Returning, gun and game in hand,
From his accustomed daily stroll,
Who hailed ; a ship approached the strand ! —
A ship ! caught they the words aright ?
For such was an unwonted sight
To that uncharted, lonely sea !
And turned the maidens eagerly,
All other feelings put to flight,
To scan the waste. A vessel sure ;
Against the sky's blue wall, far o'er
The waves she crept, cloud-like and dun,
Inbound perchance for Richmond Isle,
Thus sighted early by the sun

Which just betrayed her canvas pile ;
But gradually clomb sail on sail
Above the broad horizon's brim,
Pressed by the jocund Southern gale,
Until the phantom gray and dim,
Grew palpably upon the view,
A thing of pride and grandeur grew,
And life-like in her onward march,
Drove the green surges as in play,
In troops before her up the bay,
Or rolled them o'er in foam and spray ;
The noblest thing 'neath heaven's high arch !

She scorned the shore, approaching near,
And turned away ; and soon again
With leaning spars, in full career,
Was out upon the lonely main,
Her white wings hugging close the gale,
Behind her far a sparkling trail —
A gossamery weft of snow,
Which the vexed waves toss'd to and fro,
As if with the intent to show

Indignity towards this queen
Of ocean with the lofty mien !
To the far sea-brink did she spin
The fleecy band. And Hester saw
Chagrined, the buoyant craft withdraw ; —
As though she had but just looked in
A moment from her lonely home
Amidst the wide, wild ocean's foam !—
But ere her haven she can hail,
Another day must flush the sky ;
Already do the gannets fly
Towards the land, and night is nigh ;
And with the coming shades the gale,
Checked by the falling dews, will fail.

Even now the breeze more gently fanned
Her pinions, and again she turned,
Joy ! joy ! — towards the welcome land !
And when the last bright embers burned
Of sunset on the purple walls
Of Wampanhegan's mountain halls,
Far inland, flushing earth and tide

With glory, effluent and wide,
She dropped her anchor off the shore ;
 Then from her smooth black side there broke
 A sudden puff of snowy smoke,
And boomed the signal gun — a roar
That waked the echoes o'er and o'er,
 Of caverned rock, and sleeping wood,
 And deep untrodden solitude,
And died upon the golden floor
Of ocean, roaming many a league,
 The lonely waters, where no ear
 Of man, the heavy peal might hear ;
And then as one that feels fatigue,
She folded her white wings to rest,
And slept upon the billow's breast.

Slowly the night stole up the sky ;
 The weary gale had hushed its breath,
 And all was as the trance of death,
Save the belated sea-bird's cry,
Or when the waves knocked 'gainst the ledge,
Or, clutching with the heavy sedge,

Drew the long tresses o'er its edge,
And tugged to keep them down the brine,
As 'twere, — with hisses which might seem
Like some sea-griffin's smothered scream —
So foemen sometimes intertwine,
And pant and struggle in a strife
That only deigns to cease with life!

Night deepened beautiful and calm ;
The lambent atmosphere all balm
With breath of flowers, that secret grew
In glens, and nooks, and coverts, known
To the dun hermit-grouse alone,
Or which the foot of man ne'er knew,
Abroad lured by the gentle dew ; —
The maidens had the cottage sought —
And Hester, lost in dreamy thought,
Sat just within the rustic stoop,
From which, in many a wreath and loop,
The wood-bine's tasselled fringes hung —
Her friend Otraska near her, flung
Beneath the oak, whose branches made

In summer heats the household's shade,
And with its wide-spread, leafy woof,
Was almost to night's dampness proof;
And not a shrub or leaflet stirred —
Nor chirp of cricket, nor of bird,
Disturbed the trance so deep and still,
Not even the nightly whippoorwill.

Oh, words can scarcely paint such scene!
The wide, dim sea, and to the right
The anchored ship, were full in sight;
And rising in the east serene,
With pearly veil just drawn aside
From her pavilion, night's fair bride,
The moon, looked down with loving glance
Upon the mystic, dim expanse —
So mild her light as scarce to fleck
The tiny wavelets, when they strayed
Beyond the steep cliff's wooded shade;
And from the stranger vessel's deck
Each murmur rose distinct, and clear,
And musical, upon the ear.

O'erjoyed those voyagers seemed once more
To greet the teeming, fragrant shore —
The words they spake, the songs they sung,
Were in the English girl's own tongue ;
And on their harmony she hung,
Till following fancy's winding maze,
She trod the scenes of other days,
The cynosure of pride and praise,
And to that faithful heart was pressed —
How fondly cherished and caressed !

One voice on board rose full and free,
And more than any other stirred
The secret founts of memory —
She caught and treasured every word ;
'Twas thus the stranger sang, and gave
His soul, as 'twere, in every stave !

S O N G .

The evening tints bedeck the sky,
The setting sun smiles on the sea,

The woods and hills the pageant vie ;
But wert thou near to look with me
How lovelier far the scene would be !

I trace the wild fowl speeding on
Far through the amber-lighted dome,
Till in the dim horizon gone ;
Once they induced a wish to roam,
But now thou art my heart's sole home !

I mark the beacon's steady gleam,
Along the distant, fading shore,
Through twilight's calmly falling dream ;
So steadily, unchanging, pure,
My heart turns to thee evermore.

There's not a scene, a star, a bloom,
Hath aught of beauty to my view —
So closely clings my cherished doom —
Save thou art near to witness too,
And then how rose-hued, bright, and new !

But go! thou art estranged — 'twere well
We were oblivious that we've met!
Still in my bosom's inmost cell
Thine image is forever set,
And I at least can ne'er forget!

Hast never marked how some wild strain,
That comes unlooked for to the sense,
Will wake an echo in the brain,
Far off, or more or less intense,
As if it had been there before?
Not that the listener may explore
The past, and tell the when or where;
Hence earnest students would declare
Such things suggest a previous life,
Are glimmerings of another sphere,
Where mortal man did once inhere,
And ran, perchance, a checked career,
Ignoble or sublime, long ere
He trod the present stage of strife.

Thus Hester hung upon each note

Entranced, and when they ceased to float
Across the wave, around her cast,
And vainly importuned the past —
How fondly, urgently — to tell
The secret of their mystic spell !
She thought of her betrothed, but no,
 E'en had he haply found his way
 Across the sea to this far bay —
And marvel 'twere, if this were so —
His voice had not such depth and flow ;
Still was the riddle unexplained. —
 But by degrees, the merry din
 Was hushed, shout, song, and mandolin ;
Yet not until the hours had waned
Towards the sober noon of night,
And in the high moon's ambient light,
The shadows of the firs had drawn
Around their bases, on the lawn,
And like a timid thing lay hid
Each 'neath its gothic pyramid.

CHAPTER V.

THE gates of morn again unclose —
But long ere from his couch uprose
The Prince of Day, his herald-rays,
In flying squadrons, all ablaze
With gala trappings, filled the arch
Of heaven — advanced his oriflame,
And took possession in his name
As 'twere — and pressed their onward march
Far down the west. Meanwhile the deep,
Entranced and panting still in sleep,
Reflected back the vermeil, gold —
The wealth of burning hues untold —
So that the eye could scarce define
Where blent the sky and watery line ;
And inland each defiant hill,

And sea-like forest, grand and still,
Each ridge, and slope, and towering tree,
Far down into the realms where night
Still swayed, plumed with the purple light,
Enhanced the gorgeous pageantry!

And even the stern bluffs of the shore,
The earth-fast battlements of rock,
God's masonry — with billow-shock
And cyclic ages dun and hoar —
Begrizzled with their wiry beard
Of stunted grasses, blandly shone,
But with a port bizarre and weird,
Through the thin veil which morn had thrown
About them — veil of violet mist,
Like dust of powdered amethyst,
Wove of the exhaling dews I wist —
Conforming to the wide display
Which ushered in the Prince of Day!

The stranger still lay weather-bound,
Just in the narrows of the sound,

Tall, moveless, with a look elate —

Unchanged in her appearance, save
That she had found a phantom-mate,

A counter-self adown the wave,
Where every spar, and line, and brace,
As in a mirror, ye might trace,
All was so tranquil ! Not a fold

Of her regalia was unrolled —
And uselessly did old Carl try

To make out from her flag's emboss,
As it hung listless 'gainst the sky,

The outlines of St. George's cross ;
Whilst from her wand-like top-mast fell

Her long, gay pennant o'er the stern,
To clasp upon the glassy swell

One that sprang upwards in its turn,
A rainbow-marriage ! Yet that calm,

Embracing fiery sky and sea,
And shore, seemed ominous of harm —
Oppressed with its intensity !

And dawn to full-orbed day gave place,

Yet not a wandering zephyr's glance
Disturbed the leaden, wide expanse ;
And sultry day advanced apace,
Still ocean slumbered as in trance. —
Meantime the voyagers, not displeased
As would seem, with the juncture, seized
The hours of leisure to explore
The deep recesses of the shore,
In quest of game ; and jocund shout,
And hunting firelock's sharp report,
From glen and forest ringing out,
With swarms of echoes to retort
The din, told of exciting sport !

But doughty, glum Carl Hildebrand
Had watched the strangers come to land,
With eye askance — and frowned to hear
The dissonance, nor would go near ;
And yet 'twas plain his noble heart,
Devoid of tinsel and of art,
In this remissness had no part.
Perhaps 'twas over-anxious fear

Of evil to his absent friend,
Should he upon their sports attend ;
Perhaps — but whatsoe'er might be
 The cause, if cause there were, in vain
 Did Hester cavil and complain
Against such rude discourtesy —
So she, half vexed, half playfully,
Inclined to christen his neglect —
 The old man only shook his head
 As if with some instinctive dread,
Albeit not wanting in respect ;
Indeed, his bearing scarce had been
More reverent, had she been a queen,
 And he some squire of low behest —
And such invariably his mein
 Towards her. Still, but once impress'd
With sense of duty, howe'er slight,
As well attempt to drive the light
Of dawn back to the realms of night,
As put his scrup'lous fears to flight —
A firmness grafted by the drill
Of camps upon an iron will !

At length despairing of success,
The maiden ceased her suit to press,
And turning to Ostraska, who
But rarely answered with a nay
To any scheme she had in view,
Took boat and launched upon the bay, —
Her own pet skiff — in hope perchance
(Like errant knight of old romance),
That some complacent circumstance
Would end her curiosity —
Thus baffled all the more intense —
Concerning who, whereof and whence,
The stranger visitants might be.

Beneath the shore the cool, dank trees,
Impending o'er the emerald tide,
Attract a slight, inconstant breeze,
With which the maidens gently glide
Out on the bosom of the wave,
Now crowning with its inward flow,
Towards the Island of the Cave,
(The beauteous Indian Quohago,)

Which reared its forest green and brave,
Westward, away a league or so,
Like one huge emerald. Yet so slow
Their progress, that day grew to noon,
And still the cove and grassy dune,
And cool oaks wooing from the sun,
For which they headed, were not won.

Again the wind dropped, and a spell
Of silence deep and breathless fell
O'er rock, and wave, and glossy wood ;
The ospray ceased his plaintive cry,
And settled downwards from the sky,
As anxious for his callow brood ;
The solitary more-rain hushed,
In the deep glens, his minstrelsy,
Upon the reef the swell scarce gushed ;
And saving when the swift-winged bee
Passed by them on his distant round,
So bare was nature of all sound,
The ear seemed rifled of its sense !
Meanwhile the sun, a burning ball,

Dropped downward from the caverned hall
Of heaven, glowed with a power intense,
And over wave and wold the heat
Danced with innumerable fiery feet.

But Hester minded not its gleam —
Reclined against the shallop's side,
Half consciously and half in dream,
Her eye swept o'er the brimming tide,
And watched above the barren rocks,
Far out, the gannet's hovering flocks,
Or roamed the shores of distant isles,
And marked the inland forest trees
Reach up as panting for the breeze ;
That still delayed ; or turned from these,
To scan the snow-white cloudy piles
Which loomed along the occident —
Here in vast toppling volumes spent
With crimson shadows ; there upheaved
In huge redoubts and towers, relieved
Against the darkly-blue abyss,
As outposts of some fortalice

Of heaven, o'er which strange banners flout
With golden fringes, or rolled out
In downy hollows multiform,
Whereon the spirit of the storm
Slept royally!

But not alone

Gazed she upon that gorgeous zone
Of towering mists; the Indian girl
Had watched each slowly forming curl
And volume stealing up the sky
By inch and inch, with jealous eye,
And reached at length towards the oar.

"The fierce wind-spirit comes," she spake
In accents that would fear ignore,

So calm — "to grasp the woods, and shake
The sea, as shakes the wolf his prey!"

"Nay!" was the quiet answer — "Nay,

My good Otraska, be at rest —

Yon are not wind-clouds, in the west,

But rather lengthened heat suggest —

No fear of sudden squalls to-day!"

And with this thought she turned away

Upon the gunnel to recline,
And gazed adown the limpid brine
(Than which th' incumbent atmosphere
Was scarcely more serene and clear),
Absorbed to see the sand-drifts gleam
And glitter to the sun's fierce beam,
In the deep undercurrent's flow,
And sea-plants stretch up from below,
With bright fish swimming to and fro,
And in and out, beneath the shade
Her own recumbent shallop made.

Just now a sudden, startling shock
Aroused her from her reverie !
On the near shore a ponderous rock,
Amidst a cloud of dust and smoke,
And crash that all the echoes woke,
Had tumbled headlong in the sea !
She smiled at fears she deemed but vain,
And turned to explore the depths again.

Once more the Indian maiden spake

“Will the pale Hester lift her eye?”—
She needs no second call to wake
Her now, to sense of danger nigh!
The volumed clouds enthroned in state
About the blue heaven’s western gate,
Have suddenly burst up the sky,
And pictured tower and battlement
Are in chaotic ruin blent,
Blackened and shattered, as if rent
By some tremendous magazine
Exploded — or some volcan-fire
Burst upward into awful ire;
The very sky seemed to careen,
As if its walls were undermined,
With the concussion! Still no sound
Came to the ear, nor breath of wind
Disturbed the quietude profound!

“You augured well, my trusty friend,”
Said Hester — “those swift mists portend
No good to us; but take the oar,
We yet have time to reach the shore,

If handled with a hearty will."

No urging needs the dusky maid ;
Already has she seized the blade,
And plies it with such strength and skill,
The little shallop seems to leap
Her length towards the land, and thrill
As if with life at every sweep !
While her companion trimmed the sail
To catch the first breath of the gale,
Which not even yet a leaflet stirred ;
Both saw the imminence of harm,
Yet neither, by a look or word,
Gave slightest token of alarm.

Just then a smoky column, vast
In bulk, and whirling, fiery hot,
Like the last belching throes upcast
From some wide conflagration, shot
Above the forests on the main,
To height immense ! — it was the dust
Whirled upwards from the distant plain
Of Casco, by the swooping gust.

It comes ! a heavy, smothered din,
As of a thousand rapid wheels
Deep in some thronging city, steals
Along the air ; and struggling in
Its fierce embrace, the maidens hear
The palpitating waters spin,
And hiss, and shudder, while more near
The trees seem shivery as with fear ! —

“ Dip deeply, good Otraska ! — ply
Your utmost strength — but half a score
Such sweeps, and then to toil good bye ”—
Cried Hester —“ aim straight for the shore ! ”

Thus earnestly spurred in the race,
For once Otraska dropped the mask
Of stoicism from her face,
And threw her whole soul in the task ;
The knotted and empurpled veins,
And tense cords in her arms and hands,
The gushing sweat, the crimson stains
Exuding from the silver bands

About her wrists, her knitted brow,
Her unrobed bosom's sobbings, show
What power the promptings of her friend
 Had, to incite her in the strife ;
 For as for self the risk of life,
If such the tempest did portend,
Had scarcely claimed a single thought, —
'Twas Hester's welfare that was sought
Alone — so deep the love she bore
 For her companion. But in vain
Her utmost toil — a moment more —
 The iron hoofs of the hurricane
Are on the forest's sons ! —

 Just then,
When o'ertasked strength had nearly failed
The Indian, from the neighboring glen,
 A strong voice, swiftly nearing, hailed :
“ Give way ! give way, my noble maid !
 Strain for your lives ! ” and with a bound,
Emerging from the leafy shade,
 A tall youth reached the rocky mound
 At hand ; but further words were drowned

In the wild thunder-din and roar
That burst adown the wooded shore !

Dim as the night when gusts enshroud
The stars and moon in reeling rack,
Like the first shock of the attack
Of hostile hosts, the whirling cloud
Disploded, with resistless sweep —
An elemental avalanche —

With twisted trunk and shattered branch
Wrung from astounded ridge and steep,
And shriveled leaves, and knotted grain,
And dust, and gravel, from the main —
And in its grasp the little sail
Shot backwards with a foamy trail,
Then bowed and blended with the wave,
And to the wildered stranger's gaze,
All was commingled in a maze
Of dust, and cloud, and lightning blaze,
Which wide and whirling, seaward drave !

“ Great God of heaven ! they're gone ! they're
lost ! ”

He slowly muttered, as he toss'd
From o'er his brow his streaming hair,
And scanned the seething vortex where
He saw the shallop disappear. —
But in the lightening atmosphere
At length a something meets his view,
Dim and uncertain, but it grew
Erewhile into the human form ;
 And clearer, 'twas the Indian girl —
 Confused and blinded by the whirl
And turmoil of the frightful storm,
She still through all the strife sustains
Her overwearied friend, and strains
To bring her to the jutting reef,
Whence he now shouts to her. But brief
The slow, convulsive toil — her strength
Has gone, and 'neath the waves at length
She settles helpless, holding fast
Her pale companion to the last !
The stranger youth around him cast ;
The gale still raved ; there was no hope
Save in himself, and could he cope

With that wild waste ? To hesitate
A moment, was to seal their fate ! —
He throws himself upon the sea,

And bravely grapples with the surge,
Attains the spot, and happily

Just as the drowning girls emerge
Above the surface. As in spite
To be thus bearded in its might,
The storm with wilder fury stoops
About his path, and whirls and whoops,

As loth to yield him up its prey —

But still he keeps the surge at bay ;
And presently a pale face droops
Upon his shoulder, as he turns
Again towards the shore, and spurns
The justling billows from his side.
But human strength cannot abide,
Nor human firmness, every test

Which life's emergencies present ;

His energy, his strength is spent,
And wave and wind press hard to wrest
Away his charge — his blood grows chill

Around his heart, his eyesight dim —
His limbs refuse to do his will

At length ; and clouds and forest swim,
And rocks and breakers, round and round,
And in his ears there is a sound
As of shrill voices ! Then a gush,

As close the waters o'er his head —
And all is pleasant, dreamy hush !

And fiery lights, green, gold, and red,
Dance up and down, and to and fro,
Like shooting stars, or swift, or slow,
Or pausing, stare with moon-like glow

Upon him — then, as on a bed
Of down he sank, and o'er his soul
Scenes of elysian beauty stole,
Such as no tongue could speak ! —

He woke

To sudden life ! A mighty oak
Had been hurled downwards from the ridge
By the tornado's arm, and lay
With all its boughs, right in his way,
A chance arranged suspension-bridge,

Fast to the rift from which it fell —

And smiting him beneath the wave
In its descent, had broken the spell
Which else had bound him to a grave !

Instinctively he reached and grasped
The nearest branch, while still he clasped
The lifeless maiden. But again
Come clouds and shadow o'er his brain —
Round and around spin sea and shore,
And as before, strange phantasms throng
About him ; but life comes once more,
And staggering with his charge along
The swinging trunk, he reached the turf
Above the rocks, above the surf,
And o'ercome with the effort, sank
With that pale burden, on the bank,
The victory won, — then all was blank !

But sooth ! Otraska's fate doth crave
A moment's thought — the true, the brave !
We left her sinking 'neath the sea !

But as a native element
To her the wave ; and though o'erspent
With fierce exertion, yet when free
To act for self, she round her cast,
And seized on such drift and debris
As were brought near her by the blast —
And struggling on, though numbed and sore,
With vitals burning as with fire,
And scarcely strength left to respire,
At last crept out upon the shore,
Behind a bluff that hid the strand
Where Hester was conveyed to land.

Still roared the frantic tempest by,
And seethed and wailed the dark expanse,
While all inwoven was the sky
With lightning shreds, naught met her glance
Beside — of her lost friend no trace —
And sick at heart, she dropped her face
Between her crossed arms, and there stole
A lethean stupor o'er her soul.

Meanwhile the swoon that had enchained

The stranger youth, was giving way ;
At last, his consciousness regained

More fully, he arose. Still lay
The pallid Hester, on the steep
Where she had fallen, as in the sleep
Of death — her temples backward thrown,
O'er which her long, bright tresses twined
With ribboned sea-grass, unconfined
By comb or bandeau, darkly shone,
Contrasting with her marble face,
And swelling bosom's virgin snow
Unrobed in the swift surge's flow,
The embodiment of every grace
That lavish nature can bestow !

He gently raised her head — but why
The sudden fervor of his eye ?

“ 'Tis she ! ” burst from his lips, “ 'tis she !

High Heaven ! — and lost as soon as found ! ”
Then in a spasm of agony,
He caught the pale girl from the ground,

And held her in his arms, and gazed
Upon her features like one crazed ;
And o'er and o'er pronounced her name,
 And from her lips one murmur craved ! —
But thought with calmer mandate came,
 And whispered, May she not be saved
If proper care be used and art ?
Hope spurs the pulses of his heart,
And joyous omen ! to his aid
Just now crept up the Indian maid.
Quick was her mind to comprehend
The deathly peril of her friend,
And eke as ready to suggest
 Restoratives ; for with her race
 'Twas sometimes made the sex's place
To practice the physician's quest,
And often had she marked the strife,
In its last stage, 'twixt death and life.

CHAPTER VI.

LIFE, spirit, soul ! they come and go,
But whence or whither who can say ?
A something dwells within, we know,
And finds expression through the clay —
It goes — the cold clay knoweth naught,
'Tis as the clod, the stock, the stone,
Inert ! that which designed, and thought,
And sympathized, and loved, is gone !
But wherefore should it not be free
To seek and own a sympathy
With ties which still to life pertain ?
If the soul dieth, if our years
On earth, of discord, joys, and tears,
Be all of life, then life is vain,
And Heaven's great work imperfect ! No,

All records, past and present, show,
With types of things still to appear,
That not alone to psalm, and song,
And visions of the ancient seer,
Do these conceits (miscalled) belong!

No! death is but the second birth —
And man, immortal, oft returns,
Lured from his spirit-home to earth
By his affinities, and yearns,
How fondly, deeply, to reveal
His guardian interest for our weal!
This Nature's diuturnal law —
'Twas no chimera Brutus saw
Stride through his tent — no fleshly monk
From whom the Imperial Russian shrunk;
They were not messengers of clay
That urged the herdsman Lot away,
Ere the doomed cities of the plain
Sank 'neath the volcan's fiery rain;
No echoes did the footfalls wake
Of that mysterious, shadowy train

Whereof the long-haired Samian spake ;
It was no deed of art or mime
That showed to recreant Saul his crime ;
Nor wrote a hand of flesh the scrawl
That stunned the royal debauchee
Of Babylon 'midst his impious glee,
And pointed his approaching fall !
Nor afterwards on Zion's hill,
When ancient prophets reappeared,
Was it through cabalistic skill,
Or subtle necromancer's weird !

Such things are not illusions — nay !
Indeed, it were as well to say
All facts our senses comprehend,
Upon imagined myths depend ! —
Nay ! — still do man-immortals sway
In life's affairs ! and often blend
With souls of earth, in sweet commune,
As chords in some harmonious tune ;
And where life's sympathies are strong,
The yearning heart may eke prolong

(And solely by the mind-spell's reach)
The life despaired of by the leech —
Even though be rent the golden chain,
Back to its house of clay again
May lure the spirit! Time will show, —
 Though wild the prophecy may seem
 And idle as a thoughtless dream —
Or soon, or late, that this is so!
Hence not all bolts launched from the bow
Of Death, may strike their victims low!

And thus Otraska's strong desire,
 When all their pains had brought no sign
Of life, lured back the immortal fire,
 It so seemed, to its earthly shrine
In that cold, silent tenement —
For then, the love and longing pent
Within the red girl's heart found vent
In outward marks, and to her breast
She caught the flaccid form, and pressed
Upon that brow her lips of flame,
 And with a whispered emphasis,

As awe-inspired, pronounced her name,
And prayed her to give back a kiss,
A pressure of the hand, a smile —
In turn appealed, commanded, urged,
All other aims and feelings merged
In that one earnest thought! And while
She gazes, even now, the quest
Is gained — comes back the spirit-guest!

Slowly the drowned girl moves — a sigh
Escapes her lips! — and then anew
In swoon she sank, and marble grew;
Anon a deeper breath she drew,
And wildered turned her quivering eye
Upon Otraska, and then fraught
With earnestness more vivid, sought
The stranger youth. As gliff and play
The summer lightnings far away
O'er cloud towers at the shut of day,
So flushed the warm blood o'er her cheek!
Anon her lips moved as to speak,
And murmured "Hubart!"

What avail
The warp and weft of more detail?
Suffice it that though chill and pale,
Thereafter, she but knew the charm
Of resting on her lover's arm,
And listening to his voice elate,
As he betimes went on to state
The phases in his own strange fate,
Since last they met.

That signet ring
Old Squanto took to Trimont Bay,
Had to his keeping found its way;
The motto in its secret spring —
"Still true" — had given to life new zest,
And sent him o'er the seas in quest
Of her! And chance, or whatso'er
You'd name that ever-active power
Which balks us oft in life's career,
Or brings about the golden hour —
The something working for some end,
Chance, destiny, a spirit friend,
(Or aught that does not interfere

With Heaven's supremacy and plan)
Had moored his vessel, weather bound,
So near her home, upon the sound ;
And then again, while he pursued
His hunt for game amidst the wood,
Had flushed a timid ptarmigan,
That hither flew and thither ran,
Contriving always to evade
His aim, and lured him from his mates
A wildering circuit — thus relates
Tradition — through the forest's shade,
So opportunely to their aid !

And heaven was in their hearts ! Below
The shelving, grassy bank at hand,
The wavelets with a gentle flow
Made soothing music on the strand.
The hurricane had ceased to blow,
But a lithe, playful zephyr fanned
With unseen wings the impending grove,
While the deep inlet, now serene
As Eden, glowed a matchless scene,

Worthy the name of "Diamond Cove,"
By which 'twas known from earliest times!

But that the beauties of the bay
Enchained their souls, it hardly chimes

With truth or my intent to say —
Yet am I ready to depone

The pilgrim day-god shineth not
On all his rounds, in either zone,

Upon a greener, lovelier spot!
For still, though many a year hath flown,

And those we treat of are forgot,
Save in rude song and roundelay,

That wild, secluded inlet smiles,
In all its primitive array —

The gem of Casco's lovely isles!

'Tis sheltered from the ocean's roar
By ragged reefs and beetling steeps,

Against whose outer bases sweeps
The restless wave forevermore;

But naught of billow-shock and din
Disturbs the tranquil scene within,

Where broad-armed beech, and oak, and pine,
With girlish, graceful elm, entwine
Their branches o'er its smooth expanse,
So that the sun can scarcely glance
At mid-day through their leafy gloom
About the shores, or zephyr plume
Its wings beneath the bank's green shade,
Where the tall hermit-herons wade ;
While forests dense which ne'er resound
To woodman's axe, sweep far around —
Nor is man's toil or traces there,
But all remains as flush and fair,
The sunny slopes, the rocks and trees,
As desert isles of Indian seas,
That sometimes rise upon the view
Of some far-wandered, wind-bound crew,
Sleeping alone midst ocean's blue —
(From time that earth commenced to run
Its course, unknown save to the sun,
And drifting cloud, — or vagrant gale,
Which, perfumed by their blooms and flowers,
In all its rounds found ne'er a sail

Before, to solace with the tale
Of their green shores and Eden bowers !)

The lonely ospray rears her brood
On tall up-reaching oak or pine,
That looks out o'er the boundless brine,
Deep in the forest solitude ;
And through the long, bright summer day,
When ocean, calm as mountain lake,
Bears not a breath its hush to break,
The snowy sea-gull tilts away
Upon the glittering swell that sweeps,
With wide-curved and unbroken reach,
Around the cliff, from outer deeps,
Unwinding up the pebbly beach.

Enchanting there is sunset hour,
When twilight with a soothing power
Steals through the forest-windings dim,
And from the thickets, sweet and low,
The wood-thrush tunes his farewell hymn
To lingering day's empurpled glow ;

When slope, and rock, and wood, around,
In all their dreamy, hushed repose,
Are glassed adown the bright profound ;
And passing fair is evening-close,
When from the rosy, radiant dome,
The sea-birds that have all the day
Wheeled o'er the far, lone billows' spray,
Come thronging to their eyries home ;
When over rock and wave remote,
From yon dim fort, the bugle's note
Along the listening air doth creep,
Now lost a moment in the sky,
Anon with sudden, martial sweep,
Through glen and forest, clanging high,
While echo roused from her retreat,
As if in banter would repeat
The tumult following in its train,
Until the wild, erratic strain,
Coursing adown the trackless main,
In realms of shadow seems to die.

And those who are of thoughtful mood,

Who love the mystic quietude
Of stars — night's sentinel array —
 (Like him, my early friend, the brave
 And courteous, long gone to his grave,
With whom I oft have whiled away
The dusky hours upon the deep,
Which most men wisely give to sleep),
Will find still lovelier there, the noon
 Of night, when as a fairy's bark,
The mirrored crescent of the moon
 Swings on the waters weltering dark ;
And in her solitary beam,
 Upon each hoar, storm-beaten height,
The mica crystals flash and gleam,
 Spangling therocks with magic light —
And when from o'er the dim-lit sea,
Inflow those strains of mystery
Which to night's quietude belong,
As of some wandering elfin throng
Tuning their spirit-lyres to song —
Or when the wakeful breeze comes out
The dusky aisles, and breathes about

A moment, shaking sweet perfume
From every honeyed bell and bloom,
Startling the tall pine from its rest,
And dreamy wood-bird in her nest,
Or fanning the calm water's breast,
Then stealing off into the shade,
As if it were a thing afraid!

Still is the inlet wild and green
As erst, though many years have been
Their circuits since occurred the scene
Herein detailed! And when with heats
Of summer glow yon city's streets,
Their throngs are wont to seek the shades
And zephyrs of its fragrant glades —
And often do the wide old woods
Ring in their deepest solitudes
To youthful shout, and song, and glee,
And viol's merry minstrelsy;
Speeds well the dance! the trunks so tall —
Rough columns of the festal hall —
Sustain a broad and lofty roof

Of nature's greenest, loveliest woof,
Fretted and arched, and sunbeam-proof ;
The maiden weaves in lieu of wreath
 The drooping fern-plumes in her hair,
And gay-hued flowers of scented breath,
 That spring to blossom everywhere
Around. The forest's dream-like rest
Hath charm to sooth the sorrowing breast,
And make the worn and weary blest !

But let us thread the waste of years
 Back to the period of our tale ! —
Around the point a boat appears ;
'Tis Hubart's comrades, who with cheers
 Approach in answer to his hail,
And take the three on board — o'erjoyed
To find the lost one, and " employed "
(Thus did their leader hint) " so well ! "
Brief was the tale each had to tell ;
And Hubart's we need not repeat.
The crew had found a safe retreat
 Within a sheltering cave the while

The hurricane howled o'er the isle ;
And since had searched the region o'er

For their companion gone astray,
Ridge, swamp, and glen, and winding shore ! —

Merry anon, the cry “ Give way !
Bend to your oars ! ” and o'er the tide
They shot, while with a look of pride
The helmsman glances at the line
Of arrowy snow cleft through the brine,
Astern ! Nor many minutes passed
Before their grapnel was made fast
At Isle Chebeague, upon the ledge.
Old Carl stood at the water's edge,
His thin, lank face perturbed and pale ;
The o'erturned boat, the oar and sail,
Bound with Otraska's wampum band,
All torn, had drifted to the strand,
And raised sad fears that 'neath the wave
The maidens both had found a grave !

And now their safety was made plain,
The fond old man could not restrain

The turbulence within ; his speech
 Eventuated in a gasp
For breath — and scarcely could he reach
 The hand extended to his clasp
By Hester, or could recognize
Otraska in the scanty guise
Her struggles with the waves had spared —
 So keenly do we feel the smart
 When from the wound is plucked the dart !
But each his gratulations shared
Alike, when he had heard them tell
 Their 'scape ; and often would he say
 In after times, in earnest way,
 As if a strange thing to convey,
 He never knew until that day,
He “ loved that red-skin half so well ! ”

CHAPTER VII.

AGAIN the matin glow of day
Comes up the ocean. Hester wakes
To hear the clattering windlass brakes
On board the vessel, as they weigh
Their anchor. Merrily they cheer
Their labor ; and with measures long
And loud, upon her listening ear
Thus sweep the stanzas of their song : —

SONG.

There she swings ! to your stations ! Once more
We are heading away from the shore !
Sheet home every sail ! Finer breeze
Never whitened its track o'er the seas !

CHORUS : — 'Tis a race with the sea gulls our
trim clipper tries,
Watch her sharp ! mind your luff ! we're away !
Huzza for the Peri ! huzza ! how she flies !
How she buries her bows in the spray !
Huzza ! huzza ! huzza ! huzza !
How she buries her bows in the spray !

'Neath our lee, reef and rock-bounded steep,
Where the foam-crested billow doth sweep,
They are fading, fast fading from sight !
Such a breeze is the sailor's delight,

CHORUS : — When the trim and the speed of
his own bark he tries, &c.

Though above us the dun tempest lower,
Give us sea room, we'll laugh at its power !
Oft before we have weathered the gale —
Let it come ! ne'er a cheek will grow pale !

CHORUS : — 'Tis a race with the sea gulls our
trim clipper tries, &c.

Ay! the home of the true and the brave
Are the wastes of the dark-rolling wave!
On the shore, men are slaves, but at sea
Like the winds, like the waves, they are free!

CHORUS: — 'Tis a race with the sea gulls our
trim clipper tries, &c.

When Hester came down to the door,
And gazed around, far out at sea
The ship with flowing sail and free,
Dashed through the sparkling brine. She bore
The gallant Hubart from the shore,
Towards her port of destiny,
At Richmond Isle — a few hours' sail,
With such a jocund western gale;
And not beyond a second day
Would he on his return delay —
This well she knew, for o'er and o'er,
Ere he embarked it had been said.
Why then that look of hopeless dread,
Of anguish unalloyed and keen,
With which she turned, at times, to mark

The cloudy canvas of the bark
Fast fading 'midst the billowy sheen?

He knew the worst — had heard it all
From her own lips — the seeming gall,
Her father had so deeply nursed
Towards him, as to one accursed
For some strange crime of deathless fame,
Which 'twere pollution even to name!
Or that, at least, such seemed his mood;
In vain the youth had scanned the past
To solve the riddle — and at last,
Firm in his sense of rectitude,
He had determined to embrace
The earliest hour, and face to face
With her stern parent, to demand
An explanation at his hand!
Thus had they parted, but the cheer
His presence gave had gone, and fear
Had taken its place, almost despair,
A voice which seemed to say, Beware
Thine evil day — the deadly sin!

Seemed constantly to prompt within.

At length the faithful Indian maid,
Who had, with many a furtive look,
Apart, beheld the storm that shook
The bosom of her stricken friend,
And not at loss to comprehend
The cause, drew nearer, and essayed
With soothing words, to break the spell ;
“ Otraska’s white friend loves to dwell
Beside the big sea-water’s bounds !
She loves her island home, for here,
Where the strong wave its war-whoops sounds,
They say, is the Great Spirit near ;
But there are other regions where
Manito for his own doth care —
Beyond the islands of the bay,
Beyond the forests, far away
O’er many streams, there is a sea
Blue as the summer skies, and free
As the swift spirit-winds that trace
Their shadows on its ample face,

To which no white man hath come near.

The woods around are dark and wide,
And in their openings feed the deer,

And on its broad and brimming tide,
In morning's calm, the maskalunge
And red trout love to leap and plunge.

“ My brethren dwell upon its shore
In peace ; their swift canoes skim o'er
Its waters — with their spears they take
The fish at pleasure from the lake ;
And even the youngest hunter's aim
Supplies the wigwam-fires with game ! —
Otraska hither came to sing

The death chant o'er Cashura's grave
In the deep forest, by the spring

O'er which the dusky hemlocks wave ;
Twelve moons have passed, her heart doth yearn
To see her kindred — to return —

Why not the pale faced Hester go ? —

Her lover soon would be a chief

Among the warriors ; and the grief

Which makes her forehead as the snow
That gleams on Wampanhegan's peak,
When round it winter tempests blow,
Erewhile would cease to blanch her cheek."

The English maiden turned, and pressed
Her dusk companion to her breast,
And smiling, earnestly replied,

" 'Twere baseness not to prize thy will
To serve me, good Otraska ; still
I may not choose thee for my guide,
And leave my father desolate, —
Abandoned to his lonely fate !
It haunts me as a deed of fear,
The very thought ! And howsoe'er
He seem exacting, well I know

His sole impulsion is my good ;
Oh ! could he but a semblance show
Of cause for this imperious mood,
It were no task for me, I trow,
My own poor humor to forego,
And wear the badge of maidenhood

To suit his pleasure. But the theme
Makes me undutiful. Away,
Base thoughts !

“ And was it not to-day
We were to seek Merconnig stream,
To try your cunning as a leech
On poor lame Natick, at the beach ?
Let's to our boat — she'll sadly moan,
If we the visit should postpone.”

* * * * *

The hush of eve again came on ;
The friends (who had all day been gone)
Returned, were resting at the door
Beneath the ample stoop ; and near,
Old Carl sat on the passage floor,
Amidst a heap of fishing gear
At work, while ever and again,
He trolled the rollicking refrain
Of some old song about the sea,
Scarce conscious ; good dame Marjory,
Her labors ended for the day,

Had taken her accustomed chair
Beside the window ; on the stair
With half-shut eyes the stag-hounds lay ;
And spinning down the lambent air
Its crystal threads, a gentle shower,
Delicious with the balmy breath
Of spruce, and fern, and fragrant heath,
Enhanced the solace of the hour !

Hester aroused at length, addressed
The wrapt old man (his roundelay
Perchance had on her mind impressed
The thought), “ Good Carl ! come, put away
Thy tackle, and rehearse some mime
To us lorn maidens — some conceit
Of high emprise, or knightly feat,
Or what thou wilt — ’tis just the time
For such — some tale of love or crime —
Which thou so deftly canst repeat
At wont.”

The wrapt old man’s gray eye
Grew brighter as he made reply, —

“Nay! nay! No minnesinger’s skill
To weave the gay romaunt at will,
Have I, in sooth — I can but state
In simple terms some freak of fate,
If aught — and shall be recompensed
If I in any wise beguile
Attention.” Pondering then awhile,
He thus a rambling tale commenced:

CHAPTER VIII.

CARL HILDEBRAND'S STORY.

My statements, lady, have to do
With the adventures of a knight
High in King Charles's favor, who,
Through all his master's trials true,
His sword in many a battle drew,
'Till foiled at last at Wor'ster Fight ;
I'll call him Rudolph — haply fame
To his brave deeds another name
Attached ; but be this as it may,
What boots it ? Foiled in that affray
Where old Noll's anthem-singing crew
So fully, fatally o'erthrew
The last hope of the Cavaliers ;

Thou, lady, wast then few of years,
But none of England, young or old,
Need of those fearful times be told ! —

The battle-hurricane was o'er,
Or sinking on the distant plain ;
The young chief glanced around once more,
He saw that further strife was vain,
His last hope quenched in seas of gore,
His bravest numbered with the slain,
So fierce had sped the woful fight,
And naught remained to him but flight !

But first he drew his crimsoned brand :
“Thou never hast my trust betrayed,”
Said he, “and ne'er shall traitor's hand
Dishonor thee, my faithful blade !”
And broke the steel across his knee,
And threw it on the gory lea —
Then to his horse — “and now my steed
Thy master's life hangs on thy speed !
A worthless life, and yet, may be,

Preserved, it shall not prove in vain !”
So ran his brief soliloquy —
He gave the charger spur and rein,
And faded on the distant plain —
Pursuit and clamor far behind,
As well pursue the tempest wind !

But though upon the battle field
Compelled thus signally to yield —
And fly, with foemen night and day
On every side, to bar his way,
Did that good chieftain falter ? Nay !
That brow so pale, so calm, concealed
A soul, to battle cark and care,
To bid defiance to despair !
And e’en when ’scaped to foreign soil
Thereafter, cramped with poverty,
Eating the bread of sweat and toil,
While on his broad, rich barony,
His conquerors reveled with the spoil,
As proud, as clear, his keen eye shone
As when he battled for a throne !

Still plotted he, and toiled, and planned !

And once more in disguise of port
And garb, he trod his native land ;

He stood in his own castle court,
He saw the banners stream abroad

Of strangers on its battlements,
The staid fanatics that kept ward,

With that stern rigor which relents
In naught, on barbican and tower —
He marked the strange usurper's power !

And thence the royal camp to win,

He turned his course across the wave ;
In place of martial strife, and din,

And banner flout, and squadron brave,
In panoply of war, around

His liege's cantonment, he found

The prince in lures of pleasaunce drowned —

'Midst masks and mimes — the flattered lord
Of heroes of the festive board,

With only sneers and gibes for those

Who dared in anywise oppose

His mood. Home, station, seas of gore,
All spent for this ! His hope was o'er !

Thenceforth the exiled knight became
A wanderer in barbaric lands —
The fierce realms of primeval fame —
Crossed trackless wastes of desert sands,
Scaled mountain steeps, trod arid wolds,
With throbbing blood and weary feet,
Where verdure shuns the burning heat,
And penetrated to the holds
Of savage rule, — vast, crowded marts,
Whose aspects, modes of life, strange arts,
Whose very names even are scarce known
To records of our tamer zone !
Cross'd continents from sea to sea,
And lonely seas from coast to coast,
Now from disease and death to flee,
Anon as fancy lured him most ;
Here making sojourn months to pore,
With pagan priest in secret cell,
O'er weird rites and forbidden lore ;

Thence going forth perchance to dwell
'Midst mighty ruins lorn and gray
With ages, whose historic day
 And date were haply lost to man
 Ere record of our race began! —
Here feted with untold display
Of pomp barbaric, and anon
Contemned and shunned, and waste and wan
With famine.

 Thus he wandered on,
Till on a summer day's decline,
While on his way to Palestine
(Or elsewhere, as whim or fate
 Might lead), from Meroe, and the grand
 Old ruins of that wonder-land
 Along the Nile, he sought the strand,
And entered ancient Cairo's gate —
And wending leisurely along
 The narrow streets, uncertain where
 To seek for needed rest and fare,
He came upon a hurrying throng
That seemed to rivet every eye ;

He turned aside, uncaring why,
When, with a sudden piercing cry,
A Jewish girl, robed as a bride,
Rushed from the concourse to his side,
And wildly importuned his aid !
With speed of thought his trusty blade
Was from his belt and ready barred,
To shield her from the Turkish guard,
Who followed her.

“ How ! Christian cur ! ”

Exclaimed the Moslem, blanched with rage,
“ Darest balk me ? Sheath thy cimeter,
Or by my beard ! thy heritage
Of life is short ! Delayest thou still ?
Darest tamper with the pasha’s will ? ” —
For firm in purpose, not a word
The pilgrim deigned, nor muscle stirred —
“ Then Allah help me ! take the meed,
Strange Nazarene, of thy misdeed ! ”
With that, he hurled his glittering steel
Full at the Briton’s breast — his zeal
Had well nigh cost him dear — the brand

No whit less promptly flew his hand,
And slightly wounded dropped his arm! —

“Go, Moslem! were I so inclined,
Thy life were cheap; but in my mind
There springs no wish to do thee harm!”
So spake our knight — then to his charge,
“And we, too, damsel, must away,
Or else these hounds thus set at bay
Will scarcely leave us long at large!”

“Alas!” her sorrowing reply,
While from her face she raised the vail,
And fixed a full, dark, beaming eye
(Whose lustrous fervor made him pale
With something like a sense of fear)
Upon him, “Fly! and leave me here —
O instantly! The pasha’s hate
Will know no mercy! — Wo is me!
’Twere better meet a cruel fate,
Than thus endanger such as thee!”

“Nay!” quoth the Briton, as he threw

His pilgrim cloak of sober hue
Upon her snowy vestments — “Nay !
Such shrewd exploit would hardly chime
With courtesy ; but lead the way —
When thou art safe, there will be time
For me to think of foes or flight —
And trust me but I find some plight
To balk this potent Moslem’s spite ! ”

At first sign of a will to brave
The mandates of their ruler’s slave
(Almost unheard of deed of fear,
For which death only would atone,
And might involve all who were near),
The timid populace had flown
The streets, and every portal closed,
And lattice drawn, — so none opposed
Their passage ; and they hurried on,
Up, down, athwart. But there was one,
An old man in uncouth attire,
As fleet of foot — the maiden’s sire, —
Who had seen all, and who anon

Their steps arrested, at the port
Of a huge Saracenic pile ;
They entered on its spacious court —
“ Here can we safely rest awhile,”
The old man spake — “ and if our guise
Is pierced, ’twill be by friendly eyes.
’Tis true, we’ve little time to lose,
But ’twere a caitiff’s way to choose
A later hour, a calmer mood,
To speak our thanks ”—

“ Nay, by the rood ! ”

Impulsively the knight demurred,
“ I’ll none of this ! I but beguiled
A moment’s leisure — ne’er a word ! ”
The gray-beard would not be deterred —
“ She is my only daughter — Child !
My Désirée, canst not express
A word, a look, of thankfulness
To thy preserver ! — thus o’ercome ! —
Excess of thanks doth make her dumb,
I wonder not. — Our tale’s soon told ;
The pasha sought her — proffered gold !

I spurned him and his minions — (true,
'Twere virtue to oppress the Jew,
And such I am !) — but scarcely spurned
Before the myrmidons returned,
And tore her shrieking from my breast,
When thy arm — but thou know'st the rest.
If wealth thou lackest, ample store,
Thy coffers shall be running o'er !
To brave upon the public street
The pasha's slaves ! Unheard of feat,
By Aaron's beard ! And swift and keen
Would vengeance follow it, I ween,
Should adverse fate — Heaven balk the hour ! —
Hereafter place thee in his power !
But now pass out among the throng ;
This dervish cloak," — and here he spread
His own guise o'er the Briton's head,
And in it wrapped his form, " will be —
For once thanks to their bigotry ! —
Protection from all harm, for thee ;
'Twere braving fortune to prolong
Our tarry here. — Meet me again

Beyond the Nile, on Gizeh's plain,
Beneath the western pyramid,
To-night — soon as the moon is hid ;
There is emprise on foot, brave Frank,
For such as thee ; and station, rank,
Are in my gift ! — No place is here
For explanation, were there time ! —
Dost thou approve ?”

“ Impute it crime
In me if I fail to appear !”

Was the rejoinder. “ Then adieu !

Remember — ’mong the date palm trees,
When sinks the moon !” enjoined the Jew —

“ The pyramid of Cephrenes ! —
Go now !” But fails he to comply,
Scarce consciously — the full, dark eye
Of the Jew’s daughter, as a spell

Controlled him ! Thrice he turned away,
Still at the portal to delay,
Ere he pronounced the word, Farewell !

CHAPTER IX.

THE night had fallen serene and bland,
The crescent moon, shorn of her rays,
Seemed floating on the violet haze
That rose above the desert's sand ;
Whilst higher, in a sky as clear
As though there were no atmosphere,
The earnest stars seemed thronging near,
And all adrift — so strangely bright
Were the pulsations of their light !—
True to his trust, the pilgrim knight
Stood in the palm grove, where the Jew
Had craved the midnight interview ;
But all was still — he was alone
Amidst those mountain piles of stone,
The pyramids — the mightiest scene

Of man's power earth hath ever known,
Or, happily, shall ever know ;
Solemn, mysterious, serene,
Among the stars their sharp heights shone,
Their bases unknown fathoms low —
Defiant of the shocks of Time ;
When earth shall meet with overthrow,
Then will those monuments sublime !

He lay down in the solitude
Upon the sands, with awe imbued —
'Till sleep, long kept at bay, subdued
His limbs, but not his spirit quelled ;
In broken visions he beheld
The kings, the demi-gods of eld,
Each issuing from his massy tomb
With stately step and brow of gloom ;
The mighty pharaohs, — Rameses,
Suiphis, Chéops, and Cephrenes,
Dark Moeris, Thoph,
And Amunoph,
Sethos and Sôe — and with the rest

That stern priest-king who so oppressed,
Moved thereto by their God, the kin
Of Joseph, swift to purpose sin !
But haply his abode of years
Twice thousands in the immortal spheres,
Had taught him 'twas no idle freak
For even kings and priests to wreak
Their bilious humors on the weak —
That love makes stronger ties than fear !
With trailing garments came he near,
And pointing eastwise towards the land
Of Palestina, muttered low,
They still the wine press tread of wo !
The fields are ripe — thrust in thy hand
And reap ! and thereat swayed his wand
Above the sleeper.

At the stroke
The Briton suddenly awoke !
Was it a shade that seemed to glide
So swift but noiseless from his side,
And dimly flit from palm to palm,
Or some marauder plotting harm ?

He grasped his sword, and gazed around ;
But nothing stirred. The crescent moon
Had sunk, the night had passed its noon
An hour or more — where was the Jew ?
Had ill befallen him ? was he true ? —
Far to the east, the river wound
Dim and majestic, but in vain,
He scanned the dim-lit, arid plain ;
No hurrying pilgrim met his eye,
And save, at times, a jackal's cry,
Upon the silence broke no sound,
Unless it were a single bird
Among the palms, — a soft, sad note,
That from the blue heavens seemed to float !
It was the same he oft had heard
In his far home-land, when a boy,
And life was as a round of joy ;
Alas ! what marvel that it stirred
His thought to sad and bitter strife ?
That boyhood's comrades, where were they ?
His fond, proud mother ? — passed away ;
His brothers ? — fallen in the mêlée

Of battle — and his youthful wife,
Whose love he valued as his life,
Perhaps estranged, himself as dead
Accounted — and the throbbing breast
Which oft had soothed his weary head,
In rapture to another's press'd!
Shuddering at such portent, he sank
Again upon the arid bank,
For once despairing at his fate —
Mute, hopeless, homeless, desolate !

Thought! thought! how tortuous, how strange,
How wide and wonderful thy range!
A simple bird thus start a train
To end in madness of the brain!
But so it is; a sound — a strain
Of long forgotten harmony,
A touch, the flavor of a fruit,
The lonely ruin, gray and mute,
The fragrance of a flower, the bee
That bends the clover on the lea,
The murmur of a forest-spring,

A spider's network — anything
To which the memory can cling,
May prompt to musings to control
The deepest mysteries of the soul,
And lead to acts to sway the fates
Of peoples and of potentates !

But to the lone knight — on the sands
He lies, his face plunged in his hands,
Silent and motionless as dead,
Yet not alone ! With stealthy tread,
A file of Moslem guards have crept
Towards him, deeming that he slept,
And deftly from its scabbard drawn

His cimeter ; and now grown brave,
They rally him, “ Up ! Christian-born !

Ho ! rouse thee from thy sleep ! We crave
Thy company — our liege awaits
Thy coming at his palace gates,
Impatient of an interview ! ”

But at their touch, at once renerved,
The Briton from their grapple swerved,

And for his sword-hilt grasped — that gone,
What could he single-handed do ?

Forth others rushed — a score to one —
From 'midst the palms.

“ Enough ! lead on ! ”

He spake, “ unless, most thoughtful Turk,
It suits thee here to do thy work ! ”

“ Nay, valiant Frank, thy taunts forbear !

'Twere death to us to harm a hair

Of thine — such is the pasha's charge,

Else had we left thy sword at large ! ” —

The aga made no more reply,

But hurrying to a ruin nigh

At hand, from 'midst a troop of steeds,

Chose one with gorgeous trappings clad,

As 'twere an emeer's, which they bade

Him mount ; and then not swifter speeds

The eagle stooping on his prey

Down from his eyrie-cliff, than they

Across the dusk and broken plain,

While mute as death their serried ranks ;

Nor did they turn, nor tighten rein,
Till hard upon the river's banks ;
And here, the pasha's gilded barge
In wait, at once received their charge,
And instantly urged by a score
Of brawny Nubians, darted o'er
The dark stream, towards the hither shore ;
Yet not until his trusty sword
Had been into his hands restored ! —
Through all these measures not a word
Had passed on either hand ! — What next ?
The knight, although in sooth perplexed,
Asked not ! — Suffice it, ere an hour
Of various incident had flown,
Mured in the pasha's donjon tower,
He trod a dreary cell alone.

He glanced abstractedly around ;
The vault was large, but illy aired,
Or if above, or under ground,
He knew not, and but little cared
In truth ! — A solitary lamp

Illumed the vapors dim and damp —
Which stirred, appeared to writhe and twist
In iris hues, a living mist
As 'twere — and gave faint light to read
The records of full many a deed,
 Upon the walls, of crime, despair,
 By other victims written there.
But even these tales won little heed ;
For overworn, he threw his head
At once upon the wretched bed,
The only fixture of the cell,
And slept, how long he could not tell :
When he awoke it was to see
 A Moslem bending o'er his couch,
 Whose speech made needless to avouch —
If other need were — his degree.

“ Brave Frank — nay ! start not thus, nor lower
 Thy brow, I purpose thee no ill ;
'Tis true I have thee in my power,
 But 'tis that, having learnt thy skill
In arms — aside from thy affray

With my chief aga yesterday —
It boots not how ; I might advise
With thee, upon a grave emprise !

We need not banter mysteries — hear !

There is a plot to circumvent
My rule in Petra and Judea

On foot, — 'tis said of wide extent ;
So much the better — just so wide
Shall be my vengeance satisfied !
So Allah aid ! But to the tale !

Along El Ghor and in the vale
Of rugged Mousa camped, a band

Of caitiffs, drawn from every clime,
And led by foreign chiefs, have planned
To seize upon your holy land !

In heedless ease they bide their time
For action, — Greek, Jew, Nazarene,
Apostates of the Aloween
And other desert tribes, a throng
Ill armed, but in position strong,
Ripe for the sword — fit subjects they

To keep my troops in sabre-play ! —

The leaders of these paynim ranks
Would ape the warfare of the Franks,
In plotting this accursed raid —
Hence, Christian, have I sought thy aid ;
Take thrice a thousand horse, which wait
Thy nod, beyond the eastern gate,
And while these robbers feel secure
From danger nigh, down on them pour,
Resistless as the fatal fire

That blazes in the fierce siroc !
Grind them to dust ! rack and consume
Their cohorts with an utter doom !—

Let not a soul escape the shock !
Then name what thou wouldst most desire, —
Power, wealth, slaves — ay ! e'en though it were
The matchless wench thy cimeter
But yesterday bore from my hand ;
And doth she bide in all my land,
I swear it by the sacred shrine
Of Mecca, that she shall be thine ! ”

“Pasha!” at length the knight replied,
“For country, home, and fireside,
I’ve plunged into the deadly strife,
And often periled limb and life;
Nay, more! I’ve laid my lance in rest,
And sometimes stemmed the battle tide
To aid the wo-worn and oppressed. —
But solely not for wealth or fame,
Have I defied war’s fearful game;
Nor will my Christian creed allow,
Barred nothing else, to do so now!”

“Creed! Briton!” quoth the Moslem, “creed!”
Blanched with the effort to surmount
His passion — “by the holy fount
Of Zemzem! but thou jeer’st indeed!
’Tis something men profess to heed,
When suits their aims! But, proud knight, spare
Thy jests — I pray thee to forbear!
’Twere well in season you should learn
That chafed my will has little care
For what may follow; ere you spurn

My proffer, think awhile at least ;
Leave creeds to mufti, scribe, and priest,
So Allah help thee ! But I fear

My own quick humor, and will hence
To the divan, that in suspense
Awaits me, but will seek you here
Again ere day-dawn ! Ponder well ! ”
And with these words he left the cell,
His eye dilating with the ire
He strove, but vainly strove to quell —
The smothered volcan’s seething fire.

“ *Think ! think awhile !*—well, I have thought !

Assist thee to exterminate
The brave men whom thy fear and hate
Have goaded, till almost distraught,
They rush to battle in their might,
And shake thy empire ! ” mused the knight ; —

“ To this, perchance, referred the Jew —
May Heaven forsake me if I do !
What then ? Rack ! torture’s vengeful spite !
The doom of death, uncertain, slow,

The craven gloats o'er ! Be it so ! —
By Heaven ! could I but strike a blow
For these bold foes, right cheerfully
Would my good sword its scabbard flee —
Even though the mêlée laid me low ! ”

CHAPTER X.

LEFT to himself, the Briton paced
With hurried strides his dungeon. Fate
Had certes never found him placed
Before in quite so dubious strait —
On all sides so completely bound
With toils. But list ! that stealthy sound,
As of approaching feet — a tread
So light he scarce knew whence it sped,
Or if at all ! He grasped his sword,
And with his straining eyes explored
The granite walls on every side,
As best he might ; but in the gloom
His flickering lamp fails to illumine,
If harm lurked near him, none espied !

The massive dungeon door, ajar,
 Oped on a narrow passage way
 Barred at the end ; at length a ray
Of light, scarce brighter than the star
Of eve sends from her throne afar,
 Crept through the opening as astray ! —
And can it be he sees aright,
A maiden nearing with the light ?
He shades his eyes — “ That regal plight !
 That form — by heavens ! — ’tis Désirée ! ”
He muttered — “ or some elf, with eyes
As dark and large, and in her guise ! ”
 Then o’er him stole a deathly fear —
 If the Jew’s daughter, how come here ?
For him, perchance, the sacrifice ! —
But whether mortal maid or elf
 From fairy realm, she becks him on,
 Springs up the circling stair — is gone —
Ere he can well compose himself
To follow ! — Through the narrow vault
He gropes his way, but soon at fault,
Nor door, nor passage can he find —

As in a tomb mured, all is blind !

He turned him slowly to retreat
Towards the cell, when from his feet
A door swung up, and face to face

He with the comely Jewess stood ! —

He seized her hand, but changed his mood ;
“ How Désirée ! in such a place ! ” —
“ Hush ! hush ! ” she whispered — “ not a word,

Or all is lost ! Methought I heard
The guard’s voice ! ” Then, light as a bird,
She darted down the pillared aisle,
Before them lost in gloom, the while
Her finger raised — (whereon a gem,
Worthy a prince’s diadem,
Flashed back her cresset’s flickering flame,
And made it seem more dull and tame
By contrast) — raised as to imply
The need of silence — danger nigh !

The knight, in doubt but that he dreamed,
So like enchantment all this seemed,

Up, down, athwart, still followed on,
Through mirrored hall, and wide salon
And chamber, whose expansive height,
 Quaint tracery, and rich emboss,
And gilded equipage, the light

 But faintly showed — up, down, across —
And never seemed in doubt his guide.

 At length they reached a pillared court
Or vestibule. She drew aside

 A hidden wicket in the port,
And gratefully inflowed the breeze
 Of midnight from the garden bowers,
 Rife with the dewy breath of flowers
And odorous shrubs ; and through the trees
 His eye caught here and there the play
 Of fountains, many a jet and spray,
 That changed and flickered in the ray
Of the young moon.

 But not for these
Did Désirée her flight abate,
 But on, through winding pathway strove,
 And blossoming copse, and palmy grove,

Until, arriving at a gate
That opened on the brimming Nile,
She turned, with triumph in her smile,
And whispered, " All is safe as planned
Thus far ! — a shallop waits well manned
Without, to bear thee up the strand
To Bissateen, where arms, and steed,
And friends await, who little heed
El Haroun's frowns !

" Nor will thy flight
Hence in the watches of the night
Suspicion or pursuit excite ;
For often, on some secret charge,
At this lone hour the pasha's barge
Thus leaves the shore — alas ! 'tis said,
At times on mission foul and dread,
Whose import some faint, smothered scream,
Or veiled corse floating down the stream,
Is but too ready to betray
Where none dare question !

" But away !

The boat waits ! Yet a moment stay !

My presence here needs be explained ; —
Not favor bought by honor stained
Leaves me at large. One of our race,
A kinsman true, is high in place,
Within the palace walls. In sooth,
The earlier portion of my youth
Was spent here in his charge ; and when
My rescue from El Haroun's men
By thee, called forth the despot's spies,
Like locust swarms, of every guise,
So none might know, or whom to fear,
Or whom to trust, they sent me here
In secret, to my kinsman's care —

The only hope left — to evade
The tiger in the tiger's lair ! —

Thus far all's well. Had aught betrayed
Our stratagem, the fatal hour
That saw me in the pasha's power,
This trusty friend " (and here she drew
A poniard's jeweled hilt to view,
From 'neath her vest), " Heaven give me grace !
Had saved me from his loathed embrace ! "

The knight in admiration wild
Was lost — “ Strange sire and stranger child ! ”

He muttered — “ such heroic rede
To plan, such nerve of steel to do
And dare, well may the pasha heed ! ”

And then, scarce wittingly, he drew
Towards his lips her snowy hand —
The while the other arm had spanned
Her slender form in its embrace —
And gazed upon her fair, round face,

The which the glances of the moon
Invested with a lofty grace,

Almost seraphic — certes, boon
Bestowed unneeded, for before
'Twas one man might almost adore !

“ The boat waits ! ” — presently he spake,
“ But waits for *us* ! Thou wouldst go back
To what ? Dishonor, or the sack,
Or bow-string ! — Nay ! nay ! for my sake,
Sweet Désirée, if not thine own,
Fly hence ! — I will not go alone !

It were to me unknightly stain ; ” —

“ Yet it behooves that I remain,

Or all is lost ; ” was the reply —

“ Our plans are not complete — but hark !
That shout ! ’tis not the muezzin’s cry !

It bodes no good — haste and embark ! ”

And with an air of quick alarm,

Withdrawing gently from his arm,

She stood attent, like one some charm

Doth fix, then turned and whispered, “ Fly !

’Twere fatal to prolong our talk —

Farewell ! ” and darted up the walk ;

But turned a moment ere from view

Her form was hid, and waved her hand

In token of a last adieu,

And disappeared.

The knight awhile

Stood gazing up the dusky aisle,

Then with a sigh, turned to the strand ;

And soon embarked, with muffled oar,

Was fast receding from the shore,

His inmost heart-springs in a whirl

Of wild commotion — present lot
Of peril all unrecked — and not
A thought save for the Jewish girl !

Dost think perfection dwells with men ? —
Oh, there are fearful moments, when
Temptation hath too strong a sway !

When syren-like she lures us on,
Till strength and principle are gone !
And darkness seems almost like day !
Not this alone to passion's slave,
For often are the good and brave,
And strong in purpose, first to yield,
And once upon the sinuous track
Press madly forward, nor turn back
Until too late — their doom is sealed !

Nay, not perfection on the earth,
With all its passions, bickerings, dearth
Of heart and soul ! We read of saints
Sometimes, in priestly homily,
Sin-proof, steel-mailed in the restraints

Of resolution ; if such be,
And therefrom heaven is to derive
Its shining spirit-tenantry,
'Twill scarcely be a teeming hive —
That land of immortality !
'Tis true, albeit, there may be those
Who walk with footing firm and sure,
Whatever passion may disclose
Its bait, or syren may allure ;
But here were reason to suppose
They ne'er had passions to repress —
Or had destroyed them through excess !

And let the sophist, proudly meek
And self-reliant, who is prone
O'er follies of the godless weak,
Complacently to shrug and groan,
And deprecate, but be accursed
With the fierce, seething, scorching thirst
Of love misplaced, or counted crime ;
Or other passion-thrall whose zest
Is contraband, and stand the test

Unscathed, and it might be confessed,
He were a monument sublime
Of strength — howe'er, of slight avail
To "point the moral" of our tale!

The noblest sometimes fall — they tell
That angels pure and lovely fell
From heaven! And all have need to screen
Themselves, at times, behind the prayer
Of him, the lowly Nazarene,

Father, from this temptation spare!
Leave not the unwary to the snare! —
'Tis circumstance that most controls
Careers! Still there are sterling souls
And saintly! Strong of trust in man,
Earth, Heaven — that all things are the plan
Of Wisdom, and unswerving tend
To some high purpose, glorious end —
True in their aims, they self discard,
And whatsoe'er they find to do
For weal of humankind, pursue
With all their might — prince, warrior, bard,

Priest, statesman, peasant, serf — the few
In every station, every sphere
Of life, run nobly their career ! —
And deem ye not our pilgrim-knight,
Though turned aside, abandoned quite !

CHAPTER XI.

MEANWHILE the Briton's shallop speeds

Towards the strand at Bissateen,
With oar that scarcely stirs the reeds

Upon the marge, or breaks the sheen
That mantles o'er the brimming tide
From the low moon, so deftly plied ;
And ere an hour he reached the shore.

Here waited his approach a score
Of horsemen, who with welcome brief
But cordial, hailed him as their chief.
Few words sufficed to tell their aim —

And scarcely need the record say

They were of those who 'gainst the sway
Of Haroun planned revolt — the same
Whereof some days before the Jew

Had hinted at. Without ado,
The knight was ready to accede
To their appeal to take the lead
In the emprise. —

“ To horse ! away ! ”

At once the order ; and when day
Broke o’er the desert with its smile,
Long leagues behind them was the Nile —
And on the wide and waste expanse
Of sand, no object met the glance,
Save here and there, a rock, a mound,
That rose from out the level sea,
In bald, abject sterility ;
While silence breathlessly profound
Clung to the shriveled sands, and bound
In its tense toils the atmosphere,—
A silence such as man in fear
May show when death is lurking near ;
And even the clank and jangle made
By the advancing cavalcade,
No echo from its haunt betrayed,
But made the elemental sleep

By contrast, seem more hushed and deep !

Southward and eastward, on they hied
By trails known only to their guide
(A chieftain of the Aloween),
Where man, it seemed, had rarely been ;
But towards decline of day the scene
Became more broken — and erewhile
They entered on a rough defile,
'Midst beetling precipices, riven,
And rent, and torn, in every shape,
As if an earthquake once had striven
'Neath their foundations, and agape
Had left the mountain's granite heart,
And hence the deep and tortuous pass.
And not an herb, nor blade of grass,
Nor moss, did sign of life impart
To the gaunt ledges — while a gale
Born out among the crags that scowled
Beyond, above, unceasing howled
Along its shaggy walls a tale
Of desolation, which so dread,

Made the heart desert.

Through the bed
Of this deep gorge, with wary tread
And slow, the horsemen picked their way —
Down, down, 'midst rocks where scarce the day
Could look, so cavernous and lone ;
And but a narrow strip of sky,
Far up the grim gap, caught the eye,
In which, as during midnight, shone
The stars ! But still they onward strove —
And still the more contracted grew
The chasm, till wholly from their view
The sky was hid, and in the gloom,
From side to side, there scarce was room
Forward in single line to move ;
Yet on they clomb.

Once and again,
The knight suspicious tightened rein,
And felt his sabre ; but the shouts,
Prolonged and cheerful, of their guide,
To follow on, dispersed his doubts.
And then the path became more wide,

And faint the upper crags were dyed
With sinking day's empurpled beam ;
Which, gradually as they advanced,
Upon the nearer angles glanced,
Till through a craggy arch the gleam
Burst full upon their dazzled sight ;
And dashing to the front, the knight
Could not restrain his wild delight
From shouts of rapture at the change
Of scene, so total and so strange ! —

They stood within a deep ravine,
Confined by cliffs on every side,
Of dizzy altitude, and dyed
With colors rivaling the sheen
Of autumn sunset skies — while green,
Broad-boughed, and knurled with rampant life,
The tamarisk and palm upsprung
About their bases, as in strife
To climb the mural steeps, and clung
To every fissure ; flowering broom,
With petals white as winter snow,

And redolent of rare perfume,
Disputed daringly below,
With the loose rocks for room to grow !
And from a rough, encumbered nook,
'Midst straggling tufts of asphodel,
Gushed up a spring, to form a brook,
That dancing down the hollow, fell,
With tinkle like a silver bell,
Into a natural basin — clear
As is the desert's atmosphere —
Thence through a rent crag found its way
Adown a darksome cavity,
Where, shattered into diamond spray,
Among the rifts and coarse debris,
'Twas lost, no more to come to day !

But that which made the glen's chief charm,
Contrasted with the crags around,
Was a broad plat of grassy ground
Encircled by the brooklet's arm
(As lover would embrace his queen),
With here and there a stately palm,

Upspringing from its emerald green,
And wooing to its shade. And here,
Secure from even a thought of fear
Or harm, a dusky throng (with steed
And camel all astroll, to feed
At will) were scattered in repose ;
But as the knight drew near, arose,
And round him with wild welcome pressed,
As though he were a looked-for guest.

“ Here ’tis our wont to hold divan ; ”
So spake the veteran Aloween,
Who o’er the waste their guide had been —
“ Here fearless we may counsel, plan,
Or seek repose, as suits our mind,
And none molest ! Not even the wind,
Praise Allah ! our retreat can find,
Unless it stoops from heaven, whose blue
Can scarce be otherwise than true.”

A slight repast — a half hour given
To counsel, and the motley throng,

With nothing but the cope of heaven

To cover them, reposed among
The shrubs and mossy knolls — for there,
In that dry clime, the midnight air
Distills no pestilential dew.

The knight, too, slept, but neither few

Nor strange the phantasms of his brain !

Once more he tramped the burning plain —
He stemmed the Nile's broad stream — anew
In Désirée's behalf he drew

His steel — then was the dungeon's guest —

Anon that bosom's panting snow,

Those full, black eyes, with love aglow,
Bent o'er him, and with breath suppressed,

Her trembling lips just touched his own —
Touched, quick as thought from his unrest
To rouse him !

Had the vision flown ?

And was it but some elf of night

That seemed to glide along the height

Above the scattered palms ? Amazed

He rubbed his wildered eyes, and gazed

Again along the shadowy hill,
But all was dusk and moveless! Still
He felt in every vein the thrill
Of those warm lips! It scarce could be
A dream — so like reality! —
He listened breathless — all around
Was slumberous quietude, profound,
Save the tired camel's long-drawn sigh,
And once, and then again, the cry
As of some bird or beast of prey,
Chiding the echoes far away;
Not even a watchman moved his spear —
With something like a throb of fear,
Perplexed, half dubious that he dreamed,
He threw himself upon his bed
Of moss, and slept till morning's red
Along the mountain summits gleamed!

In the wild wady of El Ghor,
Already had the blast of war
Been blown, and thither to the strife
Our cohort by forced marches pressed;

And when the knight roused from his rest,
He found on all sides movements rife
For speedy march. Without delay
From him the troop was under way,
And passing through the chasm, again
Moved eastward o'er the sterile plain.

CHAPTER XII.

SLIGHT, gentle mistress ! slight, I ween,
Thy pleasaunce, were I to recount
The features of each arid scene
Of their long march o'er rock, and mount,
And sandy gulch, where heat or strife
Of elements quench every sign
Of habitant, or herbal life ;
Until at length, at day's decline,
Descending through a rugged vale,
They stood upon the lonely strand
Of the Red Sea — and here a sail
In wait, received the Briton's band —
The few who met him at the Nile —
While, camping in the rough defile,
Their comrades tarried for the night,

Intending with the earliest light
To move towards their trysting post
By trails which followed up the coast.

The bark put off ; dimly and vast
 The far waves stretched, — away, away,
 On either hand, dull, sluggish, gray,
The sky with leaden mists o'ercast —
And not a sail afar or near,
Or speck, the lone expanse to cheer —
And soon the dun hills in the rear
Were lost in night. — On, on she flew,
And when the gray of morning grew
Again to day, bold Sinai's steep
Loomed far beyond the dashing deep
Upon the left — its summit veiled
 In volumed mists and wreathing rack
 Inwove with lightning shreds, and black
As that dread tempest which assailed
Its crags, when on its summit lone,
 The prophet from supernal hands
Received in charge those leaves of stone

Engraven with the ten commands! —

Yet strong and fair the wind still blew,
And onward in her far career
The little speronara flew,
Impetuous as the hunted deer —
Her cheek pressed to the hissing surge,
Which, plunging round her, seemed to urge
To madder speed!

O it is brave,
Is glorious, thus to ride the wave,
Where all is spurred to tensest life,
And 'twixt the sea and ship seems strife
For mastery — when ne'er a need
From convoy dull, or thronging sail
Around, compels to slacken speed,
Or tack and truckle to the gale!
And here the wide sea was their own!

No mart along the rock-bound strand
Sent forth its fleets, but all was lone,
Coast, mountain, wave — on every hand —
Companionless, mysterious, drear,

As if man had been swept away
From earth — or ne'er had been, — and they
Were wanderers from some other sphere,
Attracted hither to explore
Scenes never visited before !

Thus onward hour by hour they dashed,
Till, struggling through the rent clouds, flashed
Portentously the sun's low rays,
Turning the wild and yeasty maze
Of waves as 'twere to blood ! Then fell
The wind, and silent calm ensued,
Save that at times there seemed to swell
From the far inland solitude
A chime as of some vesper bell ! —
Familiar to the Briton's ear
It seemed — like that he used to hear
From the gray church tower, near the home
Of youth ; but convent, church, or chime,
Whence those sweet, mournful sounds could
come,
Existed not in all that clime ! —

At times the bended ear would doubt

It heard at all, so wavering, low,
And fine-drawn did the sound creep out ;

Then it went whirling to and fro,
As if borne through the upper air
By fitful winds — precisely where,
Or up or down, or here or there,
The senses were at fault to know.

But one there was on board to whom
The marvel brought but doubt and gloom —
Their pilot-raïs (a gray-haired sheik) —
“ Make all things close,” he promptly spake,
“ The kamsin is about to break
Upon us ! — it must not surprise
Our good bark in her present guise ! ”
Then paced the deck in thoughtful mood,
Murmuring in accents more subdued,
“ Arrested thus, so near the shore ! —
Already closes in the night ! —
O had the wind held one hour more ! —
And see ! Ben Hassan’s signal light

Even now gleams from the ruined tower,
As was arranged ! — a single hour
Of that good breeze, had been enough
 To bring us to the inlet, where
We had been safe, beneath the bluff;
 But Allah have us in his care !”

Meanwhile the crew had furled each sail,
But not too soon — the burning gale
Already held them in duress ! —
Gale ! give the word its utmost stress
Of meaning, and 'twill not express
The explosion — bursting from the land
With searing heat, and blinding sand,
And flame, and smoke, and volleying crash
Of thunder burst, and lightning flash —
That whirled them shivering, torn and rent,
 Out headlong o'er the hissing tide,
They knew not whither, — impotent
 In aught to help themselves, or guide
Their course !

Thereafter what befel

The Briton, he could scarcely tell ;
He only knew that 'midst the din
Their craft held out awhile to spin
Along the goaded waste — then came
A shock, a crash, and all was o'er!

This he remembered, nothing more.—
When he awoke, a burning flame
Was on his lips, and bruised and sore,
Within an Arab tent he lay ;

He would have risen, but the essay
Was futile — yet the stir apprised
One who, it seemed, had near his side,

Kept watch, in whom he recognized

The noble Aloween, their guide
Across the desert, and from whom

He learnt their bark with half her crew
Was whelmed beneath the wave !

“ Thou, too,”

The old chief spake, “ hadst met thy doom,
But for a peerless Almeh, who
Rushed to the wreck-lined shore, and drew
Thy cold corse from the billows' strife ;

And by such stress of heavenly art
As only Allah could impart,
At length hath won thee back to life ! —
As only Allah could inspire !

Unless the maiden's charms, indeed,
Hath quickened in thy heart the fire
Of life again ! And well I rede,
Nor marvel much, that this might be,
For ne'er did moonshid's tale express
Such form of faultless symmetry,

Such matchless grace and loveliness !
Brow lucid as the henneh's flower,
Eyes dark as those of the gazelle,
And lustrous as with passion's spell,
And cheek like morning's rosy hour
On some tall marble minaret
Just blushing — hair whose glossy jet
Would make the kohl itself seem pale,
With coy love nestled in each curl,
And teeth to rival Ormus pearl !

But my poor speech, brave Frank, would fail
To paint such houri — thou shouldst see

To know ! Beshrew me ! but 'twas she
Methinks — I'm sure 'twas she — who late
So nobly braved the pasha's hate,
To save thee from a culprit's fate !”

“What!” quoth the knight, “the Jewish maid !
How could she Haroun's spies evade ?”

“The how, 'tis not for such as I
To comprehend ;” was the reply,
“Unless 'twas by the prophet's aid —
Bismillah ! but thus much can tell,
While we were camping in the dell,
Where thou didst part our company,
She with her guard and gray-beard sire
Appeared beside our evening fire ! —
Hers is the santon's gift to see
The wonders of futurity !
And calling me in haste aside,
She urged that evil would betide
This cruise of thine ; that as a friend
Of our great cause I ought to send
To thy assistance !

“ Naught would do

But I must, with a chosen few,
Our swiftest camels mount, and ride
At once — I fain thought to pursue
A shade ; but vain did I advise.

Good sooth ! the honey of her tongue,
As closely to my arm she clung,
And poured the lustre of her eyes
Into my very soul, had lured
My feet away from Paradise,

Were I just at its gates, assured
Of welcome ! — vain would I gainsay,
So mount we did, and night and day,
With scarce a halt, urged on afar,

Athwart the drear sands of El Tyh,
And o’er the dunes of Akabah,

Until our weary troop drew nigh
The coast, just reached in time to save
A few brave comrades from the wave ! ”

“ Good sheik, this is a wondrous tale
Of thine ! ” exclaimed the knight, his eye

Fixed on the Arab, as 'twould pry
Into his heart ; “ yet what avail
To cail, with thy presence here
In surety thou dost not deceive ! —
Was ever heard the like ? Howe'er,
'Twere equal madness to believe
As doubt — and deem not I deride
Thy honesty, when I beseech,
Where bides the Jewess ? ”

Ere his speech
The sheik had framed to meet the doubt,
Approaching steps were heard without —
The curtain folds were drawn aside,
And Désirée stood in the tent,
In bearing, form, and feature she,
But worn and pale, as if o'erspent
With vigil and anxiety
(Yet not impaired a single grace) ;
But soon this anxious mein gave place
To one of thankfulness elate !—
Whence came this change ? Was it the power
Of kindness alone — innate

In woman's heart? Why, hour by hour,
Thereafter hung she round his bed,
With sleepless eye, and noiseless tread,
When fitful fever rocked his brain,
To fan his brow, and sooth his pain,
To wet his lips, and from his sight
Debar the desert's cloudless light,
Why ready at his slightest sigh
To serve him, and with chiding smile,
Which in itself could pain beguile,
To counsel silence when he fain
Would thank her for her kindness — why?

CHAPTER XIII.

TIME pressed the chiefs. A tarry short
At ancient Ezion Geber's fort,
Now in possession of their friends,
And they departed. Northward wends
The pass El Ghor, adust and wide
And weary, walled on either side
With frowning ridges, heavenward thrown,
As they had been asunder hurled
By fragment of some other world
Swung sphereless, glancing 'gainst our own !
And up this wady, once o'erspread
By some tremendous river's sweep,
Through sands, in which at every tread,
Their panting steeds sank fetlock deep,
The troops their toilsome route pursue —

The knight and Absalom the Jew,
Apart in converse.

“Here of eld
The haughty dukes of Edom held
Their rule ;” exclaimed the old man — “ here
They made their dwellings in the rock,
And thence came forth in pomp, to mock
At Israel ; — where are now their pride
And power ? Our prophets prophesied —
They set their faces ’gainst Mount Seir,
And spake in burning words the will
Of Heaven, and Edom fell — a prey
Decreed, to every scourge and ill
That claims alliance with decay ;
Their thronging hosts were swept away,
And none thereafter to this day
Pass through their land, as was foretold ;
Their palaces are desolate,
The owl, the vulture, and his mate,
And wild beasts of the desert, hold
Estate in all their wide domain ! —
So may the doom of Heaven disperse

The cruel tyrants who now curse
Mount Zion with their graceless reign !”

“ ’Tis fitly said !” returned the knight ;

“ A proper prayer ! and to that end,
May we soon have a cast to smite

The caitiffs ! — but, my noble friend,
As to this power of prophecy,
Methought that it had ceased to be —

Had perished with the seers who penned
The holy records, and outside
Those records could no more abide ;
So saith the Christian’s priestly guide,
At least ; but late events have shown
The future is at times foreknown.”

“ Nor rest such doubts alone with those
Who in the Nazarene repose
Their confidence,” discoursed the Jew.

“ But is there any matter new
Or old with Heaven ? Wouldst gauge the scope
Of inspiration ? Wouldst confine

God's will, the never-failing mine
Of thought, to character and trope
Of written tongues, which year by year
Grow in their meaning, shift and vere,
Or cease to mean? Restrict as well
Light to the diamond in its cell,
Or hold the ocean in the shell
That glitters on the shore! — Be blind

To wind, wave, forest, mountain, sky —
Bid the strong surges of the mind

Roll back, and leave the soul-bed dry
As imbricated sands, whereon

The facile fingers of the sea

Have left in weird chirography
A record of its power, and gone

Back to the depths — so thou'lt succeed

In any effort to ignore

The thought-waifs drifting from the shore
Of the invisible world! Indeed,

There's not a bird, a moth, a flower,
The smallest mote of life — or seed,
So thou their form and fashion heed,

But quickeneth in thyself this power
Of ingress to the spirit-plain
Of cause ! ”

Returned the other, “ Vain
Were the attempt, perchance, for me
To comprehend such mystery ;
And yonder pasha, in his cell,
I’ll not gainsay, advised me well
To leave these things to priest, and scribe,
And mufti. Not of those who gibe
At holy ministry am I ! ”

“ Nor needst thou gibe ; ” the Jew’s reply —
“ Jehovah’s ministry includes
All people and all things ; all moods,
All places, times — and in his sight,
All things are in their essence right —
He made them ! ” —

Interfered the knight :
“ I’ll not contend — this may be so !
And yet it scarcely serves to show
How one with certainty may know
The morrow ! By what mystic cast

Of mind, for instance, noble Jew,
Came it that thou and thine foreknew
Our peril from the kamsin's blast?
Not certainly from any phase
Indicative of nature's ways ! ”

“ It came from the immortal spheres,”
Exclaimed the Jew — “ e'en as to seers
Of old, such inspiration came —
Save in degree, the power's the same !
And if thou wouldst this holy fire
Of spirit-prescience know, inquire
At the soul's portals ! Not as they
Who deem that Heaven can but obey
Loud-toned behests — but calm, and meek,
And patiently, the answer seek ;
And though it linger day by day,
'Twill come at length — remote and dim,
Perchance, as steals the evening hymn
Of bell tones o'er far-reaching plain,
From unseen church tower — yet again
Distinct, as from the seraphim

The thought were flashed upon the brain !
But only they who check the thrall
Of earth wants have this gift sublime,
And they each in degree — not all
Were prophets in the elder time.”

In converse thus did they beguile
The tedium of the weary way,
Till issuing through a rough defile,
At day's decline (their second day),
The thronging troops about Mount Hor
Burst on their view, a strange array
As ever champion led to war !
Druse, Turcoman, Jew, Arab, Frank,
In separate squadrons stretched afar,
Till lost beyond the mountain's flank,
Who, as he passed, with loud *huzza* !
And *Allah hu* ! — wild cheer on cheer —
With flashing sword, and lifted spear,
And banner flout, from front to rear,
As if all ready for the fight,
Hailed as their welcome chief the knight !

His proud eye kindled at the sight,
And as he spurred from band to band,
Reigning his steed with master hand,
With wilder fervor were renewed

 Their greetings, until chasm, redoubt,
Crag, glen, and distant solitude
 Rang and re-echoed to the shout! —

CHAPTER XIV.

A WEEK had passed, a toilsome week ;
Beneath a lofty colonade,
In ruined Petra's midnight shade,
The knight had thrown him down to seek
A moment's slumber (while without,
Upon the hills and round about,
His troops were scattered) ; but he pressed
In vain his lonely couch for rest,
For thought was busy ! — From the coast
Of Gaza, and from Hebron's side,
Approached the foe, a countless host,
And now stood ready to abide
The gage of battle ; and the morn
Would hear the onset's signal horn !

God wot ! no gala pageantry.

Had been their march, for day and night,
On flank and rear, reserve and right,
The Briton's nimble cavalry,
The desert-born, in clouds had hung,
And ever sure to dash among

Their squadrons where expected least ! —
A sudden shriek ! a wildering clash
Of arms ! — and groans ! — the lightning's flash !

And gone ! the din, ere fully ceased,
Belike renewed ! — And many a feast
For vulture and for beast of prey
Along their reeking pathway lay ! —
And now came the decisive day !

The Briton slept not — and at last
He rose and round about him cast.
Naught the tranquility alarms ;
His guards at hand, slept on their arms,
Careless of what might come ; and near,
The sentinel leaned on his-spear,
A statue motionless and tall

As those which decked the paneled wall —
While ruined palace, temple, shrine,
From the eternal mountain hewn,
In solemn, far extended line,
Gleamed in the glances of the moon,
Which full-orbed rode the cloudless blue
Of heaven.

Lured by the matchless view,
He strolled forth up the valley's bend,
Incautious whitherward might tend
His footsteps, and awhile forgot
All care — until a faint-heard shot
Afar, induced him to ascend
The mountain steep, whence he might scan
The distant bivouac of the foe ;
The ruins of a temple ran
Athwart the height, (some mighty plan
Of the immortal Long Ago,
Ere Edom fell) — plinth, tablet, frieze,
And broken shaft. On one of these
He sat him down — at hand below,
The gorge of Petra, filled with light —

While stretching northward, to the right,
Amidst the shaggy summits twined
The flaring central wady — sight
Sublime! — and where its sands combined
Their purple with the purple sky,
Leagues distant, he could just descry
The foe's close columns, spreading wide
And black as some vast river's tide,
Of lone Brazilian wilds, when spurned
By midnight gales. Yet scarce his seat
The knight had sought, when stealthy feet
Approaching caught his ear — he turned,
And Désirée stood at his side,
Pale, anxious, tremulous!

He caught

Her hand, but let it fall again,
As if pierced by some sudden pain!
“Thou here, strange maiden! art distraught?”
At length he spake — “Art mad? — methought
It settled that thou shouldst remain
At Akabah!”

“And so 'twas planned,”

She made reply — “but prison drear
It proved, with its wild wastes of sand
And sullen waves, and no one near
For fellowship! My kinsman’s band,
Which thence last evening came to hand,
Was escort safe! — And where but here
Does duty call me? Should I take
No interest in the mighty stake
Which extirpates a tyrant’s force
’Tis hoped — and makes my sire a king —
And thou — and thou” — “perchance a corse!”
Broke in the knight; “why hesitate
To speak the thought? And welcome fate
Perhaps ’twould be!”

“Oh, wherefore sting
Thy friends with such rash bantering?
Why raise such fears! Oh, if ’twere so!”
Exclaimed she wildly, as his arm
She grasped with look of deep alarm,
And gazed into his face — “But no!
May heaven forefend!” —

A sudden light

Flashed on his brain — that look ! that tone !
Once more her hand was clasped, despite
Instinctive coyness, in his own ;
And in her upturned, pallid brow,
Ne'er half so beautiful as now,
Prone on his arm, he sought to read
A certitude of what indeed
He feared to hope as to despair,
Feared with no purpose to forbear ! —

He gazed till admiration grew
To passion fires, which to subdue
He strove, till quivered nerve and vein,
Nor longer able to restrain
The storm, he caught her to his breast
As though her strength were naught — and prest
His lips to hers — thought, soul, heart, will,
Combined in that ecstatic thrill !
“ Mine, Désirée, mine must thou be ! ”
He murmured incoherently,
“ Forever mine ! ”

In vain the maid

His burning words sought to evade ;
“Nay ! nay ! brave Frank !” she spake at length,
Repulsing him with all her strength —

“It cannot be ! Wo will betide
This passion sure ! Think of thy bride

In thy far home ! — But heaven forefend
That my last words should be to chide

One who has proved my more than friend,
And that when just to risk his life
For me and mine in deadly strife !

Yet leave me ! leave me ! ” and a tear
Stole down her burning cheek — “ Oh, why
This bitter test ? — then turned to fly —

Yet checked the thought in mid career ;
And standing for a moment still,
As taxing all her strength of will
For some strange purpose, with firm tread,
Retraced her steps to whence she sped.

“ I might,” she slowly spake, “ have doomed
To closest mask, the love I feel
For thee — might stifle, crush, conceal,

Till life were by its fires consumed —
Might! said I? Oh, I have repressed
The burning secret in my breast,
Till it hath robbed me of all rest!

But cannot bear to give *thee* pain!
Be this of my deep love the test,

Sir Rudolph — I accept the stain! —
Thine thou wouldst have me — be it so!

Whate'er thy lot, my love, my truth,
Shall transcend that of gentle Ruth —
Not only with thee will I go,

But if thou scorn'st, I'll not repine;
Thy friends, thy kin, the least — O no!

They'd spurn me! — whosoe'er of thine
Would seek my service, shall be mine!

And wheresoe'er thy latest sigh
Is heaved, if thou shouldst wish me nigh,
There will I bide, there will I die!
For thee, for thee, be wrong my right,
So thou dost will! —

“Now for the fight!

For see, already dawns the light,

And sounds the trumpet call ; and yet
I fain would keep thee here — weak heart
That mine has grown — but go ! depart!
The fearful crisis must be met ! ”

And with a sudden turn, she drew
His lips to hers, as if to set
A seal to their betrothal — then,
Light as a fawn, sprang down the glen,
And instantly was lost to view.

Carl Hildebrand at this point rose —
The usual hour of their repose
Had long since passed ; but ’twas agreed
He should the morrow night proceed
With the narration to its close.

“ And how,” said he, about to move
Towards the door, “ dost thou approve,
Fair Hester, of my heroine ? ”
The lady musing shook her head,

As with slow emphasis she said,
“ Good Carl ! would thou hadst with the dead
Consigned her, ere this shame and sin
Had blighted ! Beautiful, but weak ! —

I'd have her pure as virgin snow
Just drifted on the topmost peak
Of alpine mountains — far above
A speck of earth stain, in her love !

Unshaken, whether weal or wo
Might follow — firm at every cost ! —

Such my ideal. — Good Carl, no !
Not virtue and not honor lost,
However tried and tempest tost ! —
O I had worshipped at the shrine
Of one so noble, so divine,
As thou hadst painted, had she proved
Immaculate and pure, despite
Her own heart, and this recreant knight,
With all his passion stress — unmoved ! ”

“ But lady, in that fervid clime,
Where woman's love is bought and sold,”

Said Carl, “ ’tis not considered crime

To wive with many — paltry gold,

Where man doth set his heart, can buy ” —

“ Not love ! not love ! ” her quick reply,

“ Thou know’st it not, good Carl — but slaves !

There are no women there ! Such soil

Can only blunt, debase, despoil ! —

Nor wonder, too, the men are knaves !

“ And as to this base Briton, he

Not even this custom vile could plead ;

A noble stamp of chivalry,

God wot ! ’Twere fitting fate indeed,

That in the fortunes of the fight,

Thou art to paint to-morrow night,

Some well-timed sword or shot should speed

The caitiff ” —

“ Nay, good lady ! nay ! ”

Broke in old Carl, his bronzed face pale

As with a mortal fear — “ I pray

Beware ! This is no fancy tale,

But ” — here he checked himself again,

And feigned a mood jocose ('twas plain
'Twas but assumed, a poor disguise),
And with forced laughter fled the scene,
Ere Hester had from her surprise
So far recovered as to press
The question, whence this earnestness
So sudden ! And what could it mean ?

BOOK SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

THE light had fled the evening sky
Again — along the ocean's rim,
The ghostly twilight, gray and dim,
Reached up as peering to make sure
Advancement might be made, secure
From dreaded Sol's all-piercing eye!
And yet though lustreless the cope
Of heaven, a dreamy, roseate glow
Lingered on wave, tree, rock, and slope,
As of the air, or to the flow
Pertaining, of the gentle wind
That came with dew-fall ; or some ray —
From the bright retinue of Day,
Lured by the matchless scene — entwined
Among the isles, and left behind—

In its last moments self-illumed!—

The island household were once more
Assembled at the cottage door,
Around old Carl who thus his promised tale
resumed.

CARL HILDEBRAND'S STORY—COMPLETED.

THE light adown the curtained east
Of which the Jewess spake, increased
To day, and far along the groove
Of the broad wady, close and dun,
The foe's vast squares were on the move —
Their weapons in the rising sun
Swept as by flames, as hence and yon
They wheeled, came into line, deployed,
In splendid pageant, to avoid
Or mountain spur, or parapet,
Or the wild horsemen who beset
Their march from every nook and pass —

Until at length the dusky mass
Grew into well defined platoons
And squadrons — lancers gay, whose spears
Flickered like bird flights, deep formed scores
Of haughty mamelukes and Moors,
Gleaming with gold ; and staid dragoons
From Croatia's northern hills, allied
With spahees fierce, and fusileers
From Dakel, and the regions far
Of sultry Meroe and Sennaar,
Wide sweeping onward, as careers
Some alpine river's surging tide,
Burst from its barriers — serried ranks
Of rude adventurers, Greeks and Franks,
And dark embattled cannoniers,
With their huge enginery of death
Plunging along the sand drifts slow
And dread, the adjutants the while,
And agas, dashing to and fro,
And up and down the broad defile,
On foaming steeds ; and in morn's breath,
Banner and pennon fluttering free

And far, and all the tinselry
And show attaching to the plight
Of warfare, shimmering in the light —
Ay, lady ! never mortal e'en,
I trow, regarded braver scene !

Nor deem ye on the Briton's side
That aught was wanting to abide
The onset. Batteries, light 'tis true
 (These only through vast toil obtained,
By the indomitable Jew),
 At points most sheltered had been trained
To sweep the pass ; and ambuscade,
 And deadly mine,
 Where'er their line
Of march exposed the foe, were laid ;
And every shelf that could command
 The open wady, every slope
 And chasm, where the assailed might hope
 Successfully with odds to cope,
Or with advantage might withstand
The battle's rush, teemed with its band

Eager for battle.

Yet o'er hill

And valley, all was steadfast, still !

So quiet that the little rill

Which, 'midst the oleanders, wound

About the rocky parapet

Where Rudolph and the chiefs were met

To scan the foe, sent forth a sound

That startled with its restless fret,

As ominous ! And save when gleamed

Some weapon flashing in the day,

Or some impatient charger's neigh

Destroyed the spell, ye might have deemed

The post abandoned !

Onward drave

The foe's battalions — wave on wave

Of serried scarlet, green, and gold,

Right onward ; and before them rolled

The Briton's outposts, as debris

Is whirled before the toppling sea

That seeks the shore ! while beckoning sword,

And trumpet call, and eager word

And cheer, from every quarter stirred
The farthest ranks to ecstasy
Of burning courage ! On they came
Resistless — full a league of horse
And foot, resplendent with emboss,
And banner flout, and plumage toss !
When suddenly a blast of flame
From hidden battery and mine,
Blazed on their close, extended line !
Down sweeping scores — crest, pennon, lance,
In heaps confused ! and chargers reeled,
Or riderless dashed o'er the field ;
And agas rushed to the advance !
Again the shivering thunders pealed !
And furrows gaped adown the square,
As ploughed by some tremendous share !
Yet but a moment did the stun
Balk their array — they wheel and pour
Upon the muniment, whose roar
Gives place to clash of swords and spears,
And struggling groups, and groans and cheers,
While down the rugged mountain run

At hand, sweep fresh ranks to support
Their hard-pressed comrades in the fort,
And thrice the point is lost and won,
Ere had as many minutes flown ;
But still they strive !

Yet not alone

At this point is the fight begun !

Far to the right the thunder tone
Of cannon wakes, and sweeps the tide
Of battle up the mountain side,
To be hurled backwards, as the surge
That 'gainst the rock-ribbed shore would urge
Its fury ! — in the searing blaze,
Rider and horse, and battery train,
And broken square, and shattered wain
Commingled in wide, wildered maze !

But 'tis to Haroun's bristling front,
His main reliance for success,
That we must turn to find the brunt
Of battle ! Onward still they twine,
Regardless of exploding mine,

And volleying shot that right and left
Have rained from ridge, ravine, and cleft,
Unswerving onward — numberless
As locust swarms! And now they press,
With headlong rush and eager shout,
The passes where commands the knight
In person — and along redoubt
And mound, thrown up on every height,
The flaming batteries' thunders wake,
Returned by the exultant foe
In shot for shot, and blow for blow,
Until beneath the boom and din
Of falconet and culverin,
The very mountains seem to shake! —
Still through the vortex on they keep
Their steady march, with dripping blade
And flaming carbine — now betrayed
In some unlooked-for enfilade
To raking battery's tempest sweep
Anon advantaged.

Checked, convulsed,
Borne forward, swerving, stayed, repulsed —

At length they gain a sheltered bridge
Of rock (upheaved from hill to hill,
The work of Nature's wondrous skill),
Where under cover of a ridge
Of their own dead, with dauntless nerve,
Screened from the raking battery's sweep,
They battle those who guard the way ;
And possibly had won the day
But for the Briton's strong reserve,
Which now pours down the neighboring steep !

'Twere worse than madness to abide
The rush of that o'erwhelming tide ! —
They turn, but in retreat disdain
To hasten, though a hurricane
Of plunging missiles, belched from scores
Of brazen tubes, and leaden rain
From thrice a thousand fusils, roars
Adown the narrow valley's bend,
Full on their reeling ranks, to rend,
Detach, wreck — whirl to heaps, like grain
Upon some Carolinian plain,

Grasped by the whirlwinds, when come on
The summer tempests.

But anon
The ascending smoky volumes soar
Above the cliffs, and floating lie
From hill to hill, 'twixt earth and sky
(That sky, so mild, so blue, serene
And holy), shutting out the scene
From view, as Heaven would thus ignore
The fearful feud! — and cannon peal
And stench of sulphur, sweat, and gore,
And scorching flesh, alone reveal
The work their murky folds conceal!

And where, while these events transpire,
Bides the fair Jewess? —

With her sire
And dusky handmaid, and a band
Of warriors posted near at hand
To guard them — and an Arab steed
(Sleek coursers of the desert stock)
For each, in case there should be need,

She had beheld the wildering shock
Of battle, from a steep ravine
High up the hills — the headlong rush,
The sweeping lines, the torrent gush
And turmoil of the fearful scene
Full on her view — one thought intense
Enchaining every look and sense !

That thought, 'twere little need to tell,
Referred to him now dear as life,
How fared he in the fearful strife ? —
With jewel-studded petronel
And yataghan of Persia, bound
In the green mantle flung around
Her waist, her taper fingers wound
Among her courser's mane — while streamed
Her own dark locks 'scaped from bandeau
And fillet, o'er her bosom's snow,
And draped her lifted arm — she seemed
But as a statue !

Well for her,
The gentle creature, trained to obey

Her slightest glance, forbore to stir —
Forbore, yet oft his whinnying neigh
And longing eye towards her turned,
Told how his eager spirit yearned
To mingle in the far affray !

Her white-haired parent stood aloof
Some paces, rigid as the stone
'Gainst which he leaned — save when his roan,
Pawing the earth with scornful hoof,
Disturbed his mood — his snowy beard
Pressed to his bosom, while his sight
Was turned away, as if he feared
To watch the fortunes of the fight,
Lest haply evil might betide
His friends the while ; — and at her side
A santon of the desert bowed
His forehead to the ground in prayer.
Erewhile the battle's turbid cloud
Came wavering up the lambent air,
Athwart the scene, concealing all
Beneath its fetid, sombre pall !

“What sayest thou, santon, art impressed?”

At length she dubiously addressed

The holy man — “how goes the fight?”

How fares it with the leader-knight,
And his? — O gracious Heaven, arrest
The fatal ball and thrusting steel!”

She cried, scarce conscious what she said —
“O hear a sinful girl’s appeal,
Nor with the smitten or the dead
Let him be numbered.”

Then again

She grasped her courser’s silken rein,
And downwards gazed, as if she fain
Would leap the dizzy chasm, and spur
Into the unseen mêlée’s whirl,
While every muscle, every vein
Of her excited steed would swell
And tremble, as with head on high,
And arching neck, and liquid eye,
He felt, or seemed to feel, the spell
That had come o’er her spirit! Then
Again she turned away, and sank

With trembling limbs against the bank,
Among the oleanders rank,
That flooded with their bloom the glen,
In agony of hopeless dread ;
And with her eyes hid in her palm,
So rigid sat, so mute and calm,
Ye might have deemed her spirit fled !

At times the sluggish clouds withdrew ; —
When opened far upon their view
Brief glimpses of the surging sea
Of passion-thralled humanity ! —
Here circling, as the maelstrom sweeps,
Towards some knoll or vantage ground,
Rank jostling rank, and pellmell wound
Together in the billowy race ;
There reeling from the mountain's base —
Dark hosts — whence all unlooked-for leaps
Some battery's flame ; again in heaps
Piled round some banner, which, though oft
Swayed to and fro, and hard beset
From every point, still flies aloft !

Here in unyielding struggle met —
Staggering and toppling, friend and foe
So intermixed they scarce can know
Where to expect or aim a blow ;
There pressed, some stalwart column's wreck,
Against the precipice's wall,
And keeping desperate odds in check ;
Yon mustering at the bugle's call,
Disparted squadrons to renew
The charge, the many 'gainst the few ;
Or forced on some entrenchment's fire,
Powerless to advance as to retire,
And melting file by file away ! —
Thus ever changing in array,
Speed on the fortunes of the day ! —

And wide o'er all the field are strown,
The battle's wrecks, — the dead, the maimed
And dying — tumbril overthrown
And shattered — culverin which flamed
No longer, wheel-less, or impent
In drifts and fosses of the slain —

Banners half poised, and soiled, and rent —

Slow smoldering ambulance and wain —
And matchlocks, spears, and lances sprent
'Midst mangled horsemen, foot, and steeds,
Thick as the jungle's broken reeds
By Irrawaddy, when has passed

The typhoon's scourge ! And here and there,
Where strife has ceased, and where are massed
The battle's wrecks most dense, the steam
Of ebbing life, and thickening gore,
And sweat of agonized despair,
Ascending slowly up the air,
As sluggish mists that crinkle o'er
The surface of some still, deep stream,
In cool autumnal morning's beam !

O lady ! ye may well opine

That tongue of glibest clerk would fail
To paint the scene — to tell the tale,
Much less such homely speech as mine !

Thus hour by hour of torture wore
Away, and still the battle's roar

Continued — but portent of fear !
At length it plainly drew more near —
When suddenly, begrimed and soiled,
The knight came staggering up the dell —
“All’s lost ! in victory’s moment foiled”
He gasped — “by traitors ! — mount ! retreat
Ere ’tis too late ! — haste ! haste !” and fell
Expiring at the old Jew’s feet !

“No ! by the sword of Gideon ! no !”
Exclaimed the old man, while a glow
Of energy, inspired, sublime,
Ennerved him — “not till one more blow
Is given ! Ho, guards ! now is our time !
To horse ! from every scabbard leap
Its thirsty steel,
And on them wheel
Resistless as the lightning sped
From heaven ! To horse !” And scarce was said
The mandate, ere adown the steep,
With echoing cheers, and flashing blade,
Full on the foe’s exultant troops

They broke, in compact front — as stoops
The eagle on his prey, as falls
The snow bolt from the blue, calm halls
Of alp-supported skies !

Dismayed,

The advancing squadrons waver, shrink,
Bear back o'er precipice's brink,
And broken ridge, and scattered rock,
Ere they could raise one answering shout, —
Horsemen and horse, in mingled rout
Down toppling, shattered ! — What avail
That I should longer eke the tale,
My mistress ? Never yet was shock
More timely, signal — ne'er defeat
More overwhelming and complete !

CHAPTER II.

SOON had the uproar of the fight
Swept by, and on the mountain cleft
The Jewess and her maid were left
Alone, beside the bleeding knight !
The silence of the desert, mute
And motionless, o'er hill and vale,
Resumed its reign ; save when the gale
In passing brought the far, faint wail
Of dying myriads to their ears,
Or more remote the shouts and cheers
Of those who in the hot pursuit
Still followed.

From his hiding place
Among the dwarf acacias, stole
The amazed gazelle, with timid pace,

And ears raised ; and from gulch and knoll,
Where the thick fiery poppies glowed
Like living coals, the partridge strode,
And gazed around, and stretched his wing
And faintly clucked, as wondering
What all this pother could imply ;
While from the blue depths of the sky,
The thronging vultures, train on train,
Drop down, unseen before, and spin
Their slow gyrations o'er the slain
And dying, eager to begin
Their ghastly banquet — every round
Descending nearer to the ground.

But, little heed paid Désirée
To these things, while the Briton lay
Before her with the mists of death
Fast gathering in his eyes — his breath
So faint, that when she tore away
His vesture, and down stooping, pressed
Her ear against his manly chest,
The stagnant silence of his heart

Smote hers as with a mortal chill !

But what is life ? — Can man by will
Of his own to his frere impart ? —
I fain believe it ! — Nay ! why start
So strangely, lady ? — Or, the same
Are life, soul, spirit ? Whereof came
The subtle essence ?

Man awaits

An answer — through the ages long
Has waited, patient, swerveless, strong
Of purpose — pressing at the gates
Of that eternal bourne, where He
Who only can reply, abides,
And 'neath its shadowy ramparts, hides
His purposes of mystery !

Life ! who may track it when are spent
Its fires ? And is it then a force
No more ? or are its forces blent

With some wide realm of such, the source
Whence all life comes ? It was, is not —
The thing it moved lies still and stark !
None saw, felt, heard it pass — none wot

The moment when it left its ark
Of matchless beauty, or the where
It bides! *It was — it is not there!*
Is all we know! Why then define
Its powers, conditions — or assign
Its bounds?

Know, lady, at the least,
'Tis nowise rare for Moslem priest
And warrior santon of the East —
In occult art from all time versed —
To stay its issues, now as erst,
By power of faith! This well I know,
Else have my senses often scanned
To little purpose. Hand in hand,
The strong may of his strength bestow
Upon the weak; nay more! by will
Alone, unaided, thus lure back
The flown life to its wonted track,
Along the pulses! Wherefore nill?
If in the mystic Long Ago,
Why not at present?

But the hour

Is near at hand when all this power
Will ken! And well the Jewess knew
Its potency, and softly drew
His hand in hers, and smoothed his brow
And temples, whereon even now
Death's dew was gathering fast. At length
He feels her vitalizing strength,
And oped his eyes, and wildly gazed
Around, bewildered and amazed!

A few words set his mind aright
As to the issue of the fight;
And then in strips the maiden tore
The linen vesture which she wore
Beneath her caftan, and applied
Its cool lint to his bleeding side
And chest, with skill that never leech
Bred in the schools, surpassed; and bound
With such few simples as in reach

Upon the neighboring rocks were found,
Therewith his hurts — then plucked and spread
The wild oat and the feathery broom,

And sleepy poppy's wealth of bloom,
In the rock's shadow for a bed,
Whereon, assisted by her maid
With gentlest care, his limbs she laid,
And pillowing in her lap his head,
With upturned, pallid face, she prayed
That Heavenly Love would interfere
And wrest from Death his lifted spear ;
And ere that whispered, earnest prayer
Had ceased to charm the listening air,
Upon his lids soft slumber fell —
And for the moment, all was well !

CHAPTER III.

How often hath the best formed plan
Been balked by cause most trivial ! Man
Will risk life, health, hope, heaven, indeed —
The last to risk — religious creed,
Upon some favorite issue — strain
His every energy to gain
The wished-for boon — besiege, invade,
Sack, burn, sink countless treasure, wade
Through seas of blood ! and when is won
At last, the longed-for rubicon,
Will stake the dearly-purchased prize
Upon some “ trifle light as air ” !
Alas ! that e’er I should declare
Such shabby fate to an emprise
Begun with auguries so fair

As this, the Jew's attempt to free
His father-land from tyranny —
Begun with such decisive blow ;
Yet, lady ! it was even so !

It little boots that I relate
The sad details ! how jealousy
Of precedence grew into hate
Among the chiefs ; how bigotry
Of diverse faiths, foremost to fill
The world with war, blood — every ill,
From all time, meekly crept among
The tents, and lapped with slimy tongue
The crumbs of discord that were flung
Toward its eager maw, till fed
To full, it reared its hydra head,
And spewed the venom of its spite
On every hand (the while the knight,
Who solely had the power to stay
These fierce dissensions, helpless lay
Upon his bed of pain) — till they,
Who at the war's inception burned

As one, to smite the tyrant, turned
Their swords upon each other's ranks ;
And thus their strength was thrown away —
And then chief after chief withdrew
His force, till but a faithful few
Of stalwart Israelites and Franks
Clung to the standard of the Jew.

Nor was the wary spoiler slow
To take advantage of these ills.
At first upon the distant hills
The shattered remnants of the foe
Began to show themselves ; then grown
More bold, and in their strength increased,
They pushed their lines into a zone
Of posts about the little force
Still left the Briton, and ne'er ceased
To smite and harry, till retreat
Remained him as his last recourse ! —
Flight, or remediless defeat !

He fled ! What needs that I should trace

The wanderers, as from place to place
They hied them — or as prudence urged,
Or lurking spies, where none their flight
Dared follow ? — oft at dead of night,
O'er sunken glen and craggy height,
The starry lamps their only guide ;
Or on the desert's trackless wide,
By day, when in wild billows surged
The sands before the dread simoom,
And swept athwart the heavens like brume
Driven landward from the storm-scourged sea ;
Or when more dreaded than the stun
Of desert blast, the round, red sun,
High in the blue immensity,
Shot down his stinging spears of flame,
To sear their sight, and scath, and maim,
Till life seemed scarcely worth the game
Of striving for !

Let it suffice

That after weary months of toil,
And desert wandering, and disguise,
And frequent, far detours to foil

The pasha's omnipresent spies,
Grown desperate, they boldly passed
The thronged gates of Damascus ! Here
Among the friendly Jews, at last,
They found unstinted aid and cheer.

Much is the faithful Israelite
By haughty Turk scorned and despised ;
In sooth, the only merit prized
In Abraham's seed by Moslem wight,
Is what his coffers can supply !
Hence closely from the public eye
The Jew hides that which tempts the greed
Of those in power ; and passing through
His quarter, nothing meets the view
But signs of penury and need ;
Huge old serais, with ruined wings,
Fallen arch and gateway, o'er which clings
Rank, scandent verdure ; dingy walls
And domes of uncouth masonry,
Reared from the relics and debris
Of nobler works ; quaint-fashioned stalls

And booths, and cavernous bazaars,
Blackened and gashed with seams and scars
Of age, and storm, and brunt of wars ; —
But oft within are sumptuous halls,
Bedight with every garniture
And gild of ornament that art
And wealth of fancy can impart,
Or untold opulence procure !

And here the Israelite grandees,
Secure from prying eyes, dispense
Their hospitalities, with ease
And measure of munificence
That even the king upon his throne
In state, might well be proud to own !

And one of these received in care
The Briton and his friend the Jew
And daughter — need I say to fare
Most royally ? But why pursue
These minor matters till I fret
Your patience ? Yet I needs must say

That ere the month had passed away,
Beneath his princely roof were met
A bridal party, and despite
All opposition, Désirée
Became the wedded wife, or mate,
Or what you will — I but relate
The story, lady — of the knight !

Here Hester interfered, — “But why,
Good Carl, give to thy tale such turn ?
Why not have made the Jewess spurn
The shame ? or let thy hero die
Away there on the broomy bank,
When, come up from the fight, he sank
So helpless ? or to spies betrayed
The wanderers on the desert ? — made
To any mold their fortunes, save
Of her the willing victim — bride
I cannot call her — him the knave,
The villain, the betraying guide ? ” —
“Nay, lady ! as thou wilt, deride ! ”
Said Carl — “I speak of what has been,

I picture countries I have seen ! ”

“ And how, the while, behaved her kin,
Good Carl ? ” said Hester ; “ By my life ! ”
Responded he, “ they did make strife
At first, but finally gave in ;
Not that the honors of a wife
Were not conferred, so much at least
As that their faiths in different mold
Were cast — the customs of the East
Bar not such nuptials manifold,
'Mongst high and low — although, 'tis true
Such use obtains not with the Jew
As custom. — Then, the knight was bold
In his advances, and had fame —
A mighty advocate — and came
Of gentle blood as that which stains
Thy cheek, or throbs in thine own veins,
My lady ! ” —

“ What, Carl ! this from thee ! ”
Cried Hester, as impatiently
She started up, while glowed her cheek

With deepest crimson, "What strange freak,
Good Carl, induces thee to speak
As every word thou utterest rose
From fact? and spur me to suppose
That somehow my own destiny
Is mixed up in this wondrous tale! —
I pray forbear! it startles me!"
"Your pardon, lady, if I fail
In aught respectful — or ignore
My place," said he with lowly mein
And saddened — "as I said before,
I speak the like of what has been,
And picture countries I have seen!" —
"But not that this concerns me sure?"
Broke in his auditor once more.

The old man turned his head aside,
As from her prying eyes to hide
His sallow features; and there came
A shudder o'er his iron frame,
As if some long-forgotten pang
Had supervened; and Hester sprang

Towards him — “ Pardon me, my friend ! ”

She fondly urged, and took his hand —

“ Carl ! not for all the golden sand

Of famed Pactolus, would I hurt

Thy feelings ; ’tis my wont to blurt

My humor thus — not to offend,

Believe me ! — pray go on and tell

Thy story through ! It hath a spell,

A charm I cannot comprehend ! ”

The old man stammered — ’Twas a freak

Unthought — he meant — would try to shun

The like in future — (but why seek

To give an import where was none ?)

In short, he seemed, at each turn, doomed

To render matters more adverse,

Till with forced smile, and mumbled curse

Upon his stray wits ! he resumed :

Well, lady ! and no ill betide

Their lot from adverse circumstance,

In that sweet clime of love, romance,

And flowers, almost of needs, must glide
Their life with smoothest flow along ! —

Damascus ! famed in loftiest song
And story — what a tingling zest

Of romance, even to the name
Pertains ! How deeply are impressed

The wonders of its wealth, its fame,
Upon the Past ! The heritage
And home in turn, of saint and sage,

Of poesy, art, letters, law —
The stake for which in every age

Tyrants have played the game of war —
Jew, Babylonian, Persian, Mede,
Turk, Tartar, Christian — as their greed
Of power impelled — to every crown
A priceless jewel ! Mighty town !

Where is the record, where the tongue
That hath not told of its renown ?

Projected when the world was young,
Gorgeous, decayed, remodelled, hurled
To dust and ashes, it hath stood

In some sort, where to-day it stands,

From time coeval with the flood,
The pride of oriental lands,
The garden of the teeming world !

Delicious clime ! its proverbs say
Three things can charm dull care away —
Three — *water, verdure, and the grace*
That sparkles in a lovely face !
These can it boast ! Its Barrada
With all its wandering wealth of streams,
And ever green and blossoming bowers,
Where the voluptuous Moslem dreams
Entranced, away the balmy hours,
And blesses Allah that his birth
Was here vouchsafed of all the earth —
Where o'er the wide, wide world are seen
Such crystal waves, such banks of green ?
Strange waters ! in their wild ravine
Pulsating from the great earth's heart,
As 'twere her life fount, they depart
As strangely in that weird, wide lake,
Away out in the desert there,

Crouched in the stifled, pulseless air,
Wherein the summer sun doth slake
His thirst, till from its sandy brink
And confines, they retire and shrink,
Approachless, and upon the gaze
Ascending far, a living haze,
An atmosphere of purple life,
Shimmer and dance in filmy strife,
Commingled with his searing rays !

But, lady, mount with me the height
Of Salahiye, wouldst thou bless
Thy vision with the dazzling sight,
In all its vivid copiousness !
Behind us are the stern, dark crags
Of Anti-Libanus, where lags
The morning cloud ; or dull and slow
(Its trailing fringes torn to rags
By bristling ridge and splinter), drags
Its gloom athwart the glens below,
Whence from its prison house doth flow
The roaring Pharpar ; far away

Southward, and bounding the array
Of frowning steeps that keep at bay
The sand-wash of the desert, high
 O'er all the rest, the snowy head
Of Hermon slumbers in the sky
 In solemn calm ; while on the left,
 Ridge reels on ridge, and cleft on cleft,
Diminishing upon the eye,
 Till their empurpled forms are wed
With the red desert-waves, which crawl
 Prone 'neath the sunbeam as in dread,
Still onward to the horizon wall !

And wide before us is the sheen
 Of groves (save where the city rears
Its snowy domes and towers between,
 Or the broad river interferes),
A wilderness of living green —
 By contrast with the yellow rim
 Of the far sands, and mountains dim
And blue that 'gainst the sky careen
Away beyond — become intense

Almost to ebon gloss — its charms
Outbursting from the Pharpar's arms
In hoydenish luxuriance,
With plethora of leaves and bloom,
And fruit, and tangle, and perfume,
Such as the wave-bound Antilles
And palmy shores of torrid seas
Can only match !

But plunge we now

Beneath those dreamy vaults of shade ! —
What swaths of blossoms on each bough !

How hardly can the winds invade
Those dim-lit aisles of leaves and dew !
In what strange phase of form and hue,
The flowers and bloom attract the view

Where'er we turn, through grove and glade,
By fount and stream ! What wondrous sphere

Of fragrance hath its queenly rose
Flushed with full bloom, (so prized where'er

The gentle charms of flowers dispose
Mankind to goodness !) — How replete

With witching melody the song

Of the weird bulbul, as among
The deep shades of his green retreat
In the thick olives, which the light
Of noon can scarcely penetrate,
Seeming to fancy day is night,
He warbles to his sitting mate !

And when the time of harvest comes,
How droop the golden sheaves to feel
The hungry sickle's edge — how reel
The groaning orchards 'neath their domes
Of fruit, the lush peach, apricot,
Date, prune, fig, olive — and what not
Of oriental fruitage ! how

Upon the hills, in every nook
And glen, the o'erloaded vine doth bow
Whate'er it clings to, with its store,
Rich as the clusters which of yore
The spies sent into Canaan bore
Away from Eshcol's teeming brook !

But quoth the eastern sage, what worth

Were even a paradise on earth,
Without the presence and the smile
Of woman's beauty to beguile
The heart when discontents obtrude —
What better than a solitude? —
And hath not the unrivaled claim
To beauty, of Damascene dame,
For ages been the inspiring theme
Of moonshid's tale and poet's dream?
Such madrigals, such stanzas rare
And dulcet, to complexion, hair,
Lips, eyes — but lady! I forbear
The glowing thought! — yet needs must say,
 If verdure, water, and the grace
 Pertaining to a lovely face
 And form, can keep at bay dull care,
 As eastern proverb would declare,
A happy generation they
Who dwell beside the Barrada!

And in this soft Acadian clime —
Exposed no longer, for a time

At least, to fortune's adverse freaks,
On downy pinions sped the weeks
And months, with Rudolph and his bride —
And ere the rapid year had flown,
She knew the happiness and pride
To youthful mothers only known
When in their trembling arms they clasp
Their first-born ! —

Not beyond the grasp,
Were they, howe'er, of evil fate ;
Vague rumors often reached their ears
That Haroun's spies were still elate —
Their Israelitish friends had fears ;
And by-and-by 'twas counted meet
That they should seek some close retreat
Awhile, until the atmosphere
That marked their horoscope was clear !

CHAPTER IV.

MALFORTUNES, lady ! it is said,
Like Arab steeds, are swift of pace,
And often by each other led,
And so 'twas in the present case ;
The old Jew sickened ; worn with care
And disappointment, and despair
Of ever raising more to power
The Jewish throne — his dying hour
Drew near.

'Twas on a night of gloom
And tempest, in a gray old tower,
The remnant of a once proud fane,
Left standing from the general doom,
What time the ruthless Tamerlane
Swept Syria with his demon horde

Of horse, and gave to fire and sword
The city and its countless souls —
The noon of night ! The simoom roared
About the buttresses and knolls
Of the old pile, and far and shrill
Went wailing over roof and hill,
As if a host of wandering gholes
Were on their rounds in quest of prey ;
And by his pallet Désirée
And Rudolph, and a sorrowing few
Of those in whom the aged Jew
Had most confided, stood — deep awe
Revealed in every face, as once
And then again, some searching flaw
Whooped by, and fanned to brighter light
The glimmer of the brazen sconce
Depending from the ceiling's height.

The dying patriarch's eyes were closed ;
And those around in converse low
And sad, surmising he reposed,
Spake bitterly that he must go,

So long their highest hope ; that wo,
And tyranny, and wrong should be
So potent ; of the mystery
Of evil —

“ How ! wouldst ask ” — quoth he,
Arousing, “ whence doth come abuse ?
Wherein has mystery a use ?
Man’s only an explorer, and
The boon most prized is hardest won ;
Had he no evils to withstand,
No mysteries to lure him on,
Stagnation would ensue ! Ay ! crime
And wrong, — all evils — are but seeds
Of undeveloped acts and deeds
Of progress ! Nor comes this of time
Alone, of earth-life and its scenes ;
Experiences will be the means
Of progress in the far career
Of the hereafter, even as here !

“ We live to search the realms of fate ;
There is no end, no ultimate,

But that which is with God innate !
To do, to dare, and to endure
Is ours, and well ! By fire the ore
Is purged from dross — 'tis Nature's law ;
And none e'er have or can withdraw
From its control ! And what has been
Of trial, and of sorrow keen,
 And pain, to man, must be again,
 And o'er and o'er, ere he attain
The glory of that height serene
To which his inmost doth aspire !—
The tyrant's steel, the bigot's fire,
Have yet their work to do ; and still
Has Fear a mission to fulfill,
And priestly sophistry ; and pride
 Of power, still dragging in the dust
 Man's birthright — every crime and lust
That have, for ages, Heaven defied !

But though around we thus behold
 But despots, bigots, cowards, slaves,
 Dust, desert, ashes, ruins, graves,

Wherein the By-gone's fate is told,
So sure as Heaven rules earth, the right
Is, and it will in time assume
Domain ! Already is the light,
That faintly streaks the mists and brume
Which lower before us, of the morn
To come prophetic ! —

Man was born
For a discoverer ! — his field
Of search the boundless unrevealed.
At first the few, the hope forlorn,
Go forward and erect their posts,
To be met by the jealous hosts
Of the crude Past, and held at bay,
Or overcome and swept away ;
Yet other squadrons of the true
And brave press on, and claim anew
Their stand-points, and repeat the affray
And sacrifice — thrice, ten times, yea
A thousand times, and there be need !
And when at length, perchance, success
Doth crown their efforts (for succeed

They will at last), close on their lead
The great array of mankind press,
And occupy the vantage ground ;
And send still other pioneers
On through the lonely wastes to sound,
Wherever surly error rears
Its sky-capped towers, their bold demand
For entrance ! The devoted band
Is never wanting, to withstand
An onset, or to storm a sconce
Or battlement !

Such the routine
Of progress, — such has ever been !
And where progression's banner once
Is planted, there on high it flies
Forever, gleaming o'er the sky,
A meteor to the upturned eyes
Of eager hosts who thunder by
To new researches or affray ;
And once subdued, subdued for aye !
Whatever bars the dubious way
As they press forward, in the rear

All is secure, there's naught to fear !

“The day will come ! — Strange things invest

My dying couch — I stand alone,
Or seem to stand, upon the crest
Of towers which were long since impressed
Upon the ages, huge, sublime —

Night lowers above, and round me moan
The winds of desolation ! Time,
Past — future — and the way of man
Athwart the weary waste I scan
On either hand. Begloomed and drear
Sweeps the far desert in the rear,
With here and there the dim-seen ghost

Of some old landmark, crumbling wall
And wing, or long-deserted post,

Awry, or leaning to its fall —
Receding still upon my sight,
Till all is lost in utter night !
And with their backs towards the glow
Of day that feebly thus doth show
The rugged pathway, to and fro

Grope stragglers who have lost their way,
Or dubious whitherward to go,
But seem to fancy heaven and day
Abide with ages that have fled,
Nor with the living, but the dead !

“ I turn me to the Future — still
A land of gloom and mist to mark !
Yet, glimmering faintly through the dark,
Are rays of sunshine ; on some hill
Here glancing for a moment, there
Receding from the storm-tossed wave
Of dreary coasts, or with wild glare
Of spectral light, where tempests rave,
Illumining some rugged pass ;
And through these wilds, the mighty mass
Of humankind doth onward bear,
Surging and swaying like a sea
Broke from its barriers — on their lead
A troop of shining cavalry,
Whose high command few seem to heed
Of all that huge array, or know ; —

Horsemen of fire, and fiery steed,
Such as the prophet's servant saw
Of old when Syria's lord with war
Encompassed Dothan !

“ And though slow
And dubious seem their march, and met
By craggy rampart, sweeping tide,
Gulf, chasm, and crater deep and wide —
By obstacles of every guise —
Still onward doth the great flow set,
Right on, at every sacrifice !

“ It scarcely needs that I explain
My vision. Thus alone through strife
And trial will mankind attain
To nobler views of right and life.
Such are the phases of the march
Of progress ! — And the hopeful few,
Athwart the future's storm-racked arch
Of cloud, with eye of faith can view
The bow of promise ; dim, 'tis true,
And oft eclipsed, but surely there !

And when hid, and this few would tire,
Those unseen messengers of fire,
God's deputies, have them in care,
To cheer them onwards and inspire
To courage! And the host of man,
Reckless alike of aim or plan —
Come jostling after — save it be
The scattered bands that down the vale
Of ages, would trace back his trail
With hope to find his destiny
Unriddled — as if grew the fruit,
One looks for of the spreading tree,
Not on the boughs, but at the root!”

Yet once again, in accents weak,
The dying Jew essays to speak —
“Where art thou, Désirée? Come near!
Give me thy hand! — This sad career
Is almost over! Bright and wide
Before me sweeps the purple tide
That sunders earth-life from the shore
Of the unchanging Evermore!

Far voices, far and faint, which bring
Remembrance of the careless days
Of childhood; of the sweet, sad lays
My gentle sisters used to sing;
Of busy hum of town and farm,
And bird and bee, that in the calm
Of summer eves, was wont to charm
My dreamings, and the breath and dew
Of blossoming trees and flowers that grew
On cherished hill and vale, remote
And long forsaken — seem to float
Upon my senses, and renew
Their loves within my soul !

“ And child,
Stoop nearer, nearer ; on that strand
Beyond the purple wave, doth stand,
Amidst the white-robed undefiled,
Thy sainted mother — as in wait
To welcome me ! — in form the same
As when her beauty woke the flame
Of first love in my heart — imbued
Too deeply ere to be renewed —

The same as when she linked her fate
With mine — but O, how more elate
Of loveliness, could such thing be !
With placid smile she beckons me
To come, like that she wore the day
When from my arms she passed away,
And left me to combat alone
The weary years that since have flown ! ”

With many a pause, and shake of head,
And gasp for breath, had this been said —
And now he turned upon his bed ;
And all was lulled to quietude,
Save when the night blast, still as rude
 As ever, swept exultant by,
 Or down the black chasm of the sky
 With strange, deep ululations broke,
As 'twere some flying fiend pursued
 By genii of the storm ! — None spoke,
But in the pauses of the whirl
 And tumult, every ear was bent
 Above him, breathlessly attent ;

His eyes are closed, but once more stir
His thin, pale lips :

“ My senses swim —

Where tarriest thou, my daughter? — Speak!
Give me thy hand — my sight grows dim,
But heaven grows plainer — here — thy cheek,
Stoop for my last kiss — now farewell
Forever, children ! — Hark ! the swell
Of seraph voices from yon shore !

Naomi's blending with the band ! ” —

Here, stretching forth his eager hand,
As if to greet some one before
His couch — “ I come ! ” he cried, “ I come ! ”
Then sank back, and in death was dumb !

CHAPTER V.

UNBOUNDED wealth came to the knight
Through the departed Israelite ;
But who can trust to Fortune's game ?
Before the month the fickle dame
Had played him falsely — he became
A prisoner in the pasha's power,
In short — borne off at midnight hour ;
By whom betrayed to this duress,
What boots it to attempt to guess ? —
There are friends ; — yet experience shows
To most of us, that oft with those
Who seem such, may be plotting foes !

But be this so, or as it may,
He was a prisoner — sooth to say ! —

Poor half-demented Désirée !
In vain did she repine and plead
 From morn till night, from night till morn ;
For if the ruler's slaves gave heed,
 'Twas but to mock with threats and scorn ;
She was not even allowed to know
 The place of his imprisonment,
 Or on what charge he was impent —
And weary weeks and months of wo
Went by — oh ! bitter, bitter, slow,
 And drear — nor learned she their intent !

At last, despairing of success
 With the oppressor, in her zeal
 She formed the purpose to appeal
To England's stern lord for redress ;
She'd go in person, and would cast
 Herself, if need were, at the feet
 Of the Protector, and intreat
Of him forgiveness of the past,
And present help !

Scarce had she caught

(While pondering deeply), at the thought,
Ere her arrangements all were made.
Guised as a fellah to evade
Suspicion, with her baby boy —
All that she now possessed of joy
On earth — and one sole follower, who
Had always to the knight proved true,
She crossed the desert, and set sail
From Scandaroon. Alas ! my tale
Has little more with her to do !

Poor Désirée ! The Isle of Wight
Was made, and England's bluffs in sight
Hung like a cloud on ocean's rim ; —
Erewhile the hazy sun grew dim,
And with the darkness of the night
Came sudden tempest ; and despite
Their every effort they were borne,
With shattered spars and canvas torn —
All helpless — 'gainst a sunken reef
Amidst the boiling breakers !

Brief

The work those sweeping surges made
With ship and crew — while on the shore
The shivering denizens implore
Each other vainly ; none can aid !
And when the morrow morning shone,
’Midst broken plank, and bale, and stave,
Whirled shoreward by the toppling wave,
Along the neighboring beach were strown
Full many a corse ! Not one remained
Alive of all on board — and there,
With sea-grass and the sand ingrained
Among the tresses of her hair,
Lay Désirée, so placid, fair,
And beautiful, and lorn, that they
Who passed were fain to turn away
Their eyes for fear they should betray
Their sympathies in tears, although
Inured to scenes of wreck and wo,
And death, which storms in every shape
Brought to their breaker-beaten cape.

Poor Désirée ! None knew her then,

Or of her babe — if it were found
Thereat or after, with the drowned. —
Among the wild flowers of the glen
At hand, beneath a storm-wrenched tree,
Whose branches swept the lonely lea
For rods, those swart, kind-hearted men
And matrons made her lowly grave;
Her funeral service sang the wave!
They left her there to sleep alone;
And at her head some cotter placed
A simple slab of quarry stone,
On which in rustic lines were traced,
“*The drowned girl, name and home unknown.*”
And years there, by the sounding flood,
This unpretending tablet stood
Among the wild flowers; till one day
A stranger came, and went his way —
And soon thereafter, in its stead
A marble shaft above the dead
Appeared, whereon the stroller read
The brief inscription, “*Désirée.*”

“ Good Carl, so sadly you relate
The tale of this poor maiden’s fate,”
Said Hester mournfully, and deep
In thought — “ I scarcely can but weep !
Well, well and truly did she keep
Her bridal vows, and lost her life
As would become a lawful wife
In such momentous case !

“ O, me !

This all puissant love may be
A jeweled dagger in the heart
Of its unwitting devotee !

But now, Carl, for the counterpart
Of this sad story — what became
Of him on whom should fall the blame
Of all this ruin, grief, and shame ?
I can but pity him — but say,
Did he meet his deserts, I pray ? ”

“ Hold, lady ! ” quoth Carl, “ is it well
Thus to pursue the fallen ? If love

Hath such puissance as you tell,

Methinks, at least, that it might move
To some forbearance in his case !

Thou hast been told his story ; men
When they perchance their love misplace,
Love the more fearfully ! And then,
I did not claim he was a saint !”

“ Yet why not give him grace to call
To aid, at least some slight restraint,
Ere this unholy passion’s thrall
Had mastered him ? Therein you failed ;
Wouldst have the fortress when assailed,
Succumb at once without a blow ?
Nay ! good Carl Hildebrand — not so !
Not so ! however you defend
This thine imaginary friend.”

“ Well, gentle mistress, quite enough
Of turmoil, suffering, and rebuff
Was his,” said Carl, with mournful smile,
“ And that but meet the case ! — Erewhile
We left him held in durance vile ;

But still he had one faithful friend
Besides the Jewess, to the end —
The same who o'er the desert sand
Escorted her to Scandaroon ;
Returning thence, this servant planned
Unceasingly for the relief
Of the imprisoned, and in brief,
At last obtained the wished-for boon —
But only at the sacrifice
Of nearly all the wealth the Jew
Had left — not deemed momentous prize
To him in his lorn state, 'tis true !

Again alone and desolate,
He wandered forth, and long his fate
If any recked, remained unknown ;
In time, howe'er, it somehow came
To light, that 'neath another name —
I mind not, save 'twas not his own —
He had acquired extended note
Among the oppressed of orient lands,
Till, leader of dark Suliote

And fiercer Montenegrin bands,
In battle waged against the Turk,
Where basilisk did ghastly work,
And sabres flashed in frenzied hands,
Till carnage gorged the thirsty sands,
He fell — he fell while on his ear
His squadrons sang the victor cheer !

“ Thus, lady, is my story told ! ” —
“ And it hath had a wondrous hold
Upon me, good Carl, to depress
My heart ; ” said Hester. “ Ay ! despite
His foul dishonor, scarcely less
Could I feel for him had this knight
Been my own father ! —

“ And the test,
That always right is always best,
Hath thy recital well expressed,
Good Carl — that evil will requite
With evil, manage as we will ! ” —
Returned he, “ Lady ! no grave clerk
Am I to pother morals, still —

And such your mood — this have I learned
Through all my life, that whether Turk,
Or Jew, or Christian be concerned,
None may their evil doing shirk !
That wrong, in any shape, will bring
Or soon or late, its meted sting,
As sure as harvest follows spring !

“But now good bye ! I see the moon
Is verging on towards the noon
Of night. How solemn and how deep
The quietude ! 'Tis time to sleep ;
May angels o'er thee watches keep !”

END OF CARL HILDEBRAND'S STORY.

CHAPTER VI.

ANOTHER day had nearly flown
Since from Chebeague young Hubart sailed
For Richmond Island ; yet he failed
In his return ; and Hester lone
Sat by the shore in pensive mood,
In a recess deep in the wood,
Where far through airy openings shone
Blue glimpses of the sun-bright seas—
A favorite alcove where the trees
Uplifted their great shafts on high,
And spread their foliage o'er the sky
In many a lofty arch, and made
The place with its mysterious shade
Like some old gothic minster seem —
The clumps of undergrowth its shrines

And altars, and the scandent vines
Depending from the mossy trunks,
Like censers swung by unseen monks —
The more so now the sun's slant beam
Looked in among the columns gray,
And lit each aisle and winding way
With that empurpled, dreamy haze
Which often curbs the day-god's blaze
In north lands, on long summer days.

Here Hester seated, still must dwell
On old Carl's story ; and the spell
Of strange unquiet it had wrought
Upon her, all in vain she sought
Alike to comprehend or quell!
Why more than other deft conceit
Should this one bring anxiety
To her perplexèd brain? —

But see !

From yonder wild, wave-washed retreat,
O'er which those sinewy birches cling,
The watchful heron takes to wing !

Some one approaches — hurrying feet

Come nearer, nearer ; at the sound

The swift blood dyes the maiden's face !

A moment more, and with a bound,

Young Hubart gains the wooded mound,

And she has met his warm embrace

With open arms and throbbing heart !

“ Our ship is at her trading mart, ”

At length he spake, “ and I am here

Swift as old Squanto's skill could steer.”

“ And scarcely knew I, to remain

And bide your coming, or to fly ! ”

Said Hester, with her deep, blue eye

Expressive of both joy and pain,

Fixed on him.

“ What ! ” cried he, “ again

So dubious ! — why not bid me go

At once, so I the worst might know ? —

Perhaps I had advised thee so,

Save that I heard that bosom's beat

But now a different tale repeat ! ”

“ And what about the heart’s deceit
The preacher talks of ? ” answered she,
With an arch smile, whose witchery
Was compensation to his mind,
For thrice the fault.

Ere he could find
Words for reply, Otraska sprung
Before them — in her hands she bore
A missive — “ From the Silent Tongue ! ”

With eager fingers Hester tore
The seal, and read — but as she read,
The flush upon her features fled,
And grasping for support the beech,
Whose long, green branches within reach
Descended, with a deep-drawn sigh,
She held the note to Hubart’s eye !

“ Dear daughter, love and peace to thee,
And every good ! ” In this wise ran
The scroll — (just now what mockery !)

* “ An Indian runner swift of speed
Will bear this ; give it careful heed,

As you'd avoid the scorn, the ban
Of Heaven and mankind ! Letters mailed
From England, bear the unwelcome bruit
That Hubart Walsyngham had sailed, —
Thou well dost wot of his pursuit —
Directly bound for Casco Bay ;
Should he arrive while I'm away,
Avoid him ; have no word of speech,
Or missive from him, I beseech !
As you count honor dear, and life
Without reproach — as you would spare
Myself a curse too great to bear,
Turn from him as a deadly snare ;
You never can become his wife !”

He grasped, the letter and amazed,
Stunned by the blow, they mutely gazed
Upon each other ; but the blood,
Come back at length to Hubart's face,
Bespoke a variance of his mood,
And striding to and fro with pace
Impatient, he exclaimed, “ I see

It all ! — 'Twas with the sole intent
To put a bar 'twixt me and thee,
That thou to this far isle wast sent !
But Hester dear, could he not deign
In some remote way to explain
If such insuperable bar
As hinted at, exists to mar
Our happiness for aye on earth ?
It comes not, sure, of dower or birth !
And though I had not claimed such worth
As others, still methinks no blame
Of note attaches to my name ! —

“ Nay, Hester, 'tis but some strange whim
Hath seized him — some bewildering thought
Revolved till judgment hath grown dim
Upon this point — or worse distraught !
I'faith ! it is — it must be so ! ” —

Here Hester quickly raised her head
From the unmitigated wo
In which she had been cast — as though
To question if were idly said

The thought! Indeed, it seemed to start
An echo in her own sad heart;
And he, with deeper earnestness,
Went on the sudden thought to press:

“ Not wealth, state, consanguinity, —
These, Hester, stand not in the way;
Then, had he named some future day —
But mark it, ‘ Thou canst never be
His wife!’ *Canst never!* Surely here
Is proof indubious of the thrall
Of some illusion, Hester dear!

For certes, such debarring wall,
Save come of blood ties, well we wist,
Could not in anywise exist —
And from the Conqueror down, thy line
Hath never intermixed with mine! —
Then wherefore bide this keen suspense
In future? Let us hasten hence;
I’ve at Wescustogo a friend
In clerkly orders, tried and true,
Come to this wild land to pursue

His holy work, who would attend
Our wishes — let us hence and plight
Our marriage vows, at once — to-night ! ”

She started as in deep alarm
At the proposal — yet her arm,
Which he had seized, was still detained
In his — “ Demented ! ” murmured she, —
Lost in a world of reverie —
“ My dear, proud father — can it be ? ”
But though the bare suggestion pained
Her sorely, yet it brought relief,
Or respite, to that other grief !

She called to mind his frequent moods
Of seeming deep remorse or fear ;
His quick starts when herself drew near ;
His absences day after day,
In the far glens and trackless woods —
Alone in loneliest solitudes —
Where even his dogs were driven away ;
His converse as with things of air,

Half imprecation and half prayer,
Muttered in accents of despair ;
His change of humors without cause
Apparent, — and for her to pause
Was scarcely less than to accede —
And then the manly Hubart pressed
Anew so urgently his quest —
What marvel that she gave it heed,
As trembling, with her features hid
Upon his neck, at length she did !

This resolution once embraced,
There was but little time to waste
In preparation ! But the plight
Of circumstances favored flight
Just now, for Carl had gone away
To some remote isle up the bay ;
And as for Marjory, good dame
(Though always loving, kind, and true),
So that they left her to pursue
Her own affairs, 'twas all the same
To her, whate'er they chose to do ;

She never showed the least desire
To interfere or even inquire ! —

Otraska hastened to the shore,
With fleetness of a mountain deer,
To trim the pinnace — never wore
That swart face look of blither cheer ;
While Hester, calling to her aid
That strength of will which never lacked
In an emergency, betrayed
Naught of the tempest which had racked,
And still continued to assail,
Her bosom, though as marble pale.
With hurried steps she homeward tracked
Her way, to forecast for her flight
And future life as best she might ;
And ere an hour its lapse had marked
Upon the dial, they embarked !

CHAPTER VII.

NOT far from stately Yarmouth town,
Where the green fields go sloping down
Towards the shore, 'midst groves of birch,
There whilom stood a gray old church,
A relic of the Long Ago,
When substance was preferred to show !

Methinks, in fixing on its site,
The pious builders would unite
The charms of lone and lovely scenes,
 In calling to our minds the love
 Of our good Father-God above,
So potent, with the readier means
Of teaching from the sacred desk —
For scarce detail more picturesque

Could be, — of gentle grassy swell,
And wooded ridge, and slope, and dell,
And far, blue water, than is here
Combined in view! — And many a year,

It was on Sabbath the resort
Of all the country far and near ;

But Time, the innovator, wrought
Sad change ! The richer slopes and plains

More inland lured to settlement,
Where other and more sumptuous fanes
Were built ; and of the hamlet, went
Some to new homes, and others died

With age, till the old pile, bereft
Of all its consequence, was left
Discarded and unoccupied !

No longer in the lambent calm
Of summer Sabbaths, when away,
Delayed far on the windless bay,
Did pious fisher ken the charm
Of swelling hymn and fervent shout,
That from its walls came faintly out ;

No longer did its gilded spire,
Grown dim with rust, gleam with the fire
Of morn or eve, above the trees —
A landmark on the lonely seas ;
Forever had its glories fled !
The golden dandelion spread
Its crowns thick in the paths that led
Towards its entrance ; and all day —
When Sabbath with its holy spell
Of silence reigned o'er hill and dell —
Disturbed by ne'er a pilgrim's tread,
The grasshopper might tune his lay
Upon the broad stone step before
The lintel of its oaken door,
As was his wont, and o'er its floor
The field-mouse scamper in his play —
And swallow darting in and out
The broken panes, with joyous shout
Of freedom, twitter to his mate
And nestlings in their nook, below
The cornice, undisturbed.

But fate

Had darker destiny in stow
For the lorn temple — 'twas decreed
At last, in council of the town
Assembled, that it must come down !
And so with all praiseworthy speed,
It was demolished ! — and the weed
And bramble now their pains unite
To hide almost its very site ;
And save in its quaint spire and vane,
Secured upon a rocky height
At hand, no vestige doth remain
Of that revered and stately fane !

But we would turn back to the time
When it was new, and in its prime
Of sanctity, and to the night
Of Hester and young Hubart's flight. —
The evening had come on, serene
And silent, and the shadowy scene
Around glowed to the glimmery light
Of the thick stars — and there beside
The altar stood they, groom and bride ;

While near, the youthful pastor kneeled
With face upturned in silent prayer
To Heaven. A single torch's flare
But dubiously and dim revealed
The fashion of the vasty nave
And solitary choir, and gave
To every object look bizarre
And weird.

And Hester, ashy pale —

Pale as the floating, snowy veil
Flung backward from her nut-brown hair —
But still untremulous and calm,
Leaned thoughtfully on Hubart's arm;
While mute and motionless as stone,
But with her black eyes keenly bent
Upon the two, and ear attent,
Otraska stood apart alone.
And farther down towards the door,
The flicker of the torch betrayed
A group of witnesses, some four
Or five, or haply half a score,
Matron and sire, and youth, and maid,

Whose earnest faces in the light
Erect, seemed strangely wild and white
In contrast with the deeper shade
Beyond.

The holy man arose
At length, and coming forward, spake —
“ I will not further undertake
With my poor counsel to oppose
Thy wishes, Hubart ! Though I fear,
My more than brother's love for thee,
Contracted in a passage drear
And long across the gloomy sea,
May warp my judgment. But for all,
The worser evil might befall,
Should I by further doubt prolong
These troubles ; and may Heaven forgive,
If in this matter we are wrong ! ”

Thereat he bade him to receive
The hand of her he sought to wed ;
And then the fitting words were said,
And they were counted man and wife
Through good and ill report, for life !

CHAPTER VIII.

It had been settled to proceed
Upon the morrow, with all speed,
To Pemaquid, where dwelt a friend
On whom young Hubart could depend.

The morning dawned serene and still,
And on the broad blue wave, entranced
In calm, on tranquil isle and hill
Afar, the yellow sunbeam glanced
With dreamy softness ; ne'er was morn
More beautiful from darkness born ! —
Already round the way-side inn,
Where they had tarried, horse and guide,
With full accoutrements supplied,
Were gathered, ready to begin

Their journey inland ; but their host
(One Jethro Farwell, then the boast
Of all the country far and near
For his abundance of good cheer,
As for his wisdom) shook his head
In doubt.

“ We shall have storm,” he said,
“ Ere half the day is gone ! — Last night
I marked the stars were thick and bright ;
And coming to yon rocky ledge
In their descent, paused on its edge
Ere they went down ; and when the moon
Arose, all was so still and clear,
Some wakeful bird began to tune
His song, as thinking day was near
At hand ! — Those birds are curious things
To tell of nature’s ways ! Dost hear
How constantly the more-rain sings,
There yonder in the silver firs
Beside the ledge ? And mark how high
The eagle up the gauzy sky
Is winding, while he scarcely stirs,

Or not at all, his broad, dark wings !
Not surer signs of storm could be,
For certain ! ”

Hubart paid no heed

To the old man’s garrulity,
But went on to prepare the steed
For Hester.—“ More the haste worse speed ! ”

Old Jethro pertinaciously
Continued — “ If you’re so inclined,
Go on ! Howe’er, you’ll scarcely find
This Indian trail, through bridgeless flood,
And plashy meadow, tangled wood,
And glen, like level English pike —
But go on, youngster, and you like !
I’ve had my say ; you’ll ken too late,
Perchance, the truth of what I state.”

“ And yet,” he muttered, as aside

He turned him, while a look of gloom
Came o’er his features, “ wo betide !
But this will be a sorry ride
For yon pale passion-flower, his bride —

'Twill surely storm ! Mark, in the room,
With what a sleepy, reddish hue
The rising sun is streaming through
The casement — sign I never knew
To fail ! and down beside the shore,
Though not a ripple doth explore
The beach, the sedgy sea-grass swings,
As if disturbed by gushing springs
 Beneath it ; and a filmy veil
Wide o'er the bay's hushed surface clings —
Not even a fish comes up to mar
Its gossamery woof ; and far
The ocean mutters and complains,
As if through all its mighty veins
 And arteries it felt the gale
Already deeply throbbing ! Nay,
They should not issue hence to-day,
Unless among the woods, midway
They 'd meet it."

Hubart seemed perplexed ;
" Sure fairer morning never broke
Upon creation !" thus he spoke

Abstractedly, and getting vexed —

“ A storm, forsooth ! what will they next ? ”

Then turning to the Indian chief,

Old Squanto, who against a tree
Stood leaning, asked what his belief
As to the threatened storm might be.

“ The pale-face Farwell hath well said, ”

Quoth Squanto — “ Wampanhegan’s head

Stands ’gainst the blue sky, still and white —
Pomola has his wigwam fled —

It is not well

The lily bell

Should sleep among the woods to-night ! ” —

Forced to accede at last, in spite
Of present sunshine, with a smile
Of unbelief he flung the rein
Upon his horse, and for a while
At least, consented to remain.

’Twas well he did ; for presently

The gauzy film upon the blue

Of heaven, grew imperceptibly
More dull, in every part it grew
From nothing as it were, the same,
Till scarcely could the staring sun
Look through its meshes ; and there came
A cavernous silence over hill
And plain so breathless and so still,
The people wondered.

But more dun
And shadowy, crouched along the east,
A denser cloud had now begun
To stretch its bulky form — so blent
With the gray mists that had o'ersprent
The sky, 'twas hard to mark where ceased
The one into the other! Fast
And far, however, it increased
O'er the horizon's edge, and cast
An inky gloom upon the vast
Of ocean — with a swinging moan
It came on, as if upward thrown
By impent forces, and the grain,
And trees, and flowers, as if aware

Of turmoil near, while yet the air
Was breathless as the tomb, inclined
From its approach, as if to find
A shelter ; then the pattering rain
Passed by in scattered drops, and brief
Of intervals, and on the brook
Wrought fairy rings ; and smitten leaf
And burgeon turned away, and shook
Their fronts — and in the moaning wind
The forests rustled !

Not with sweep,
Like as the thunder tempests burst
Upon the hills, it came at first,
But with inconstant, stealthful creep,
Turning the leaves with gentle touch
Like evening zephyrs, — with the gift
Of music in its keeping, such
As soothes the weary heart ; but swift
To change its mood, it brought to bear
All the deep forces of the air,
And mist, and cloud, till in its clutch,
Beset with whooping drift on drift

Of swirling rain, copse, forest, tree,
Wailed in the strife and agony
Of the encounter, lank and drenched
And bowed to earth, or stripped and wrenched;
And wild and whitening fled the sea
In crouching billows to the shore —
And all between the earth and sky
Was one convulsed and frantic roar,
Such as old Jethro ne'er before
Had known since first he settled by
Those lonely waters !

Thus wore on
The lagging hours, inert, and sad,
And wearisome, till day was gone,
And night and darkness came to add
Their wilder features to the storm. —
The supper over, and behests
Of labor's duty ended, warm
And snug, the family and guests
Were gathered in the common room
Around the well-piled fire, whose light
Contrasted cheerfully the gloom

Without, when far out in the night,
Upon the surgings of the gale,
Was heard a bugle's long-drawn wail !
And then an Indian war-whoop smote
Upon their ears, but less remote.

All started, and old Jethro strode
Towards the window, but in vain
He looked ; for round the lone abode
Just then a gust of wind and rain,
More fierce than anything before,
Came sweeping, rattling rafter, door,
And window case ; and every pane
Ran with the deluge !

“ By my life !

But travelers must be distraught
To be abroad in such a strife
Of elements, when even a bear
Would cower in his inmost lair !”
Said he, returning to his chair. —

Again the tempest riot brought
The bugle's blast, far off and lone,

Then nearer whirled as if 'twere blown
Close by the ridge with triple chime
Of ti-ra-la ! “ Strange goings on ! ”
The old inn-keeper mused, “ but thanks !
The French and salvages are gone
Content — or it were just the time
To look for their infernal pranks ! ”

“ And yet was that no mounseer’s blast ; —
I know them well ” — continued he ;
“ But savors of the times long passed,
Of hawking sports and venery,
Of dear old England ! ”

At the name
Of England, Jethro’s patient dame
Grew thoughtful ; and as fancy’s dreams
Dwelt on the green fields, gentle streams,
And blue hills of the mother-land —
The ivied cot where she was born,
The loving friends and kin all lorn
And scattered far, she raised her hand
To hide the tear that would rebel,

And but a moment after fell
Upon the rounded, rosy cheek
Of the young babe upon her lap —
(Enjoying there its evening nap,
And smiling at some infant freak
Of dream caprice).

The circumstance

Evaded not her goodman's glance ;
"Thou hast been thinking, Agatha,
Of home," said he, "and well-a-day !
Would my own musings thither turn ;
Yet Agatha, good wife, why yearn ?
It is not as in days gone by
With dear old England, now ; the sword
Of the ungodly hath devoured
Her sons, or sent them forth to die
In other lands ; the unrighteous one
And scoffer guide the reins of State —
Her Zion lies all desolate —
Her spiritual Jordan floweth on
In blood ;" but save with stifled sigh,
Dame Agatha made no reply. —

Yet Hester with a throbbing heart
Heard that wild blast — and pallid grew
As winter's snows ; too well she knew
That only old Carl had the art
Of all the region to impart
The like, and in her husband's ears
She whispered hurriedly her fears,
And both as hurriedly withdrew.

A moment after from without
Was heard loud knocking, then a shout,
Demanding entrance ; but before
The taverner unbarred the door,
He seized his broadsword, while his son,
A sturdy youth of seventeen,
Took from the wall a lusty gun,
Which looked as though it long had been
In service, and with hand midway
Upon the barrel, stood at bay,
Ready to bring it to his eye ! —
When Jethro looked out, earth and sky
Seemed total blackness ; but the light

Fell on a sorry-looking wight,
 Who, pale and drenched, held by the rein
 A shivering steed ; and at his side
 There stood a well-known Indian guide,
 With folded arms, as in disdain
 Of all the pother ! —

To the shed

At hand the weary horse was led,
 And they were welcomed in. — “ A storm
 To be remembered this,” outspake
 Old Jethro, as he bade them take
 A seat upon the chimney form.

“ You may well say it — storm ? — good lack ! ”
 Exclaimed the horseman, “ I have felt
 The burning simoom round me pelt
 On Afric wastes, without a track
 Or shelter ; I have suffered wrack
 On Coromandel, at the hand
 Of tempest fierce, where burning sand
 Blent in its whirl earth, sky, and main ;
 Have been stormed by the hurricane

Of Ind, and heard the typhoon hiss

And howl adown the China seas,

But never knew such night as this !

Storm, quotha ! Boughs of splintering trees,
Leaves, gravel, stalks, tufts, shattered rails,

Broke loose from all restraint, and blent

Together — every element

Combined adrift ! — not merely gales,

But maelstroms of rain-riot, squall,

Spray, foam — from every point, and all

At once ! — Nay ! good sir — knew I ne'er

Before such strife of atmosphere —

Good lack ! methinks my every vein

Diluted with this searching rain ! ”

“ Thou hast,” said Jethro, “ chosen a day

Of tempest, for thy travels, sure ! ” —

“ My business would not brook delay ” —

Returned the cavalier — “ Nay, more !

If 'twere not that the bridge were gone

On yonder roaring stream, 'twixt here

And Harraseeket, howsoe'er

The gale might bluster and career,
 I would at every risk go on !
 But I have done what mortal could, ”
 He muttered in abstracted mood,
 As to himself — “ must leave the rest
 To Heaven ! ”

Old Jethro eyed his guest
 With curious gaze ; and then aside,
 Addressed somewhat exultantly
 His son — “ Who knows what might betide
 Our stranger lodger and his bride,
 At this dread moment, but for me ? ”

“ Bride ! ” said old Carl, with eager mein
 (For why should I essay to screen
 The fact, that brave Carl Hildebrand
 And the fleet Indian who to hand
 Had brought the missive that had been
 The impulse of the lovers’ flight,
 Were the new guests), — “ Heard I aright ?
 Has been a bridal here of late ? ”
 The taverner, alert to state

The news, proceeded to rehearse
The wedding's details — of the place,
The time, — the bride and groom, their grace
Of bearing, fashion, form, and face —
Even to the chapter and the verse
Of St. Paul whence the parson read
The trembling wife a homily
On what her duties thence would be
Towards her spouse —

“ And they were wed ! ”

Said Carl, impatient grown and pale,
Abruptly cutting short the tale ;
“ They were ! ” — The announcement sent a
shock
* Of anguish through the veteran's frame ;
But in a moment he became
Staid as the ocean-beaten rock.

CHAPTER IX.

CARL HILDEBRAND strode through his room
Alone ; perplexity and gloom
Upon his forehead — sometimes leapt
Almost, as though he sought to evade
Some evil which, close as his shade,
Still dogged him ; then more calmly stepped,
Then swerved aside ; then to a halt
Came suddenly, as if at fault
In his wild mood, and clenched his fists
Till every vein about his wrists
Was knotted, and the scarlet blood,
Dammed in its channels to a flood,
Grew purple !

Presently the door
Swung open, and with angry eye,

Young Walsyngham stands there before

The old servitor — “ Pray, good sir, why
This strange intrusion ? ” cried he — “ ’s life
Concerns it myself, or my wife ? ”

“ Wife ! ” echoed Carl — “ I pity thee !
Would Heaven that such a thing could be —
That I had power to avert the blow
From her and thee ! but proud sir, know,
She is thy sister ! ” — Calm and slow
Came the rejoinder — “ Truly ! sits
The current thus ? — good Carl, thy wits
Are getting shoal, or gone astray —
But I will not with scorn repay
Thy well-meant whim. ”

“ Would it were so ! ”

The sad reply — “ I’d barter all
Of wit, or whate’er I possess,
To know no evil would befall
Thine own and Hester’s happiness
From this sad act ! Would ’twere a freak
Of poor old Carl’s demented brain,

And thus he could avert the stain —
But Heaven be witness that I speak
The simple truth !”

Young Hubart's cheek
Grew somewhat whiter, yet he stood
With folded arms ; and scarce the smile
Of humor fled his lips, the while
Old Carl proceeded to unfold
The tale he had to Hester told
Of Désirée's sad love — the same,
Save that in place of Rudolph's name
He substituted Ravenswood !
And in the fatal shipwreck, save
Her babe was rescued from the wave —
By some strange error, or by sham
Designed, called Hubart Walsyngham
Thenceforward — and now in the pride
Of manhood stood there by his side,
There, with his sister for his bride ! —

Lord Hubart gazed with steady eye,
And arms still folded, on old Carl —

“ Here is, i’faith, a pretty snarl
To be unwound ” — but his reply
Was cut short by a stifled groan
 Behind them from towards the door ;
 And lifeless in upon the floor
Fell Hester, white as marble stone,
As cold and silent ! — Urged by fear,
 Not knowing cause to keep aloof,
Unnoticed she had followed near,
 And heard old Carl adduce the proof
Of her own hopeless ruin — heard
The strange recital, every word !

CHAPTER X.

MAN ! man ! how strange a mystery !
The fearfullest calamity
Gives calmness to the nerves and brain
Of some who suffer ! I have seen
A parent o'er his children slain,
His every child, stand calm, serene,
Directing fittingly — more calm
Than those who thronged around, for they
Grew pale, and shuddering, turned away
With anguish — no pain, no alarm —
And yet within another day,
His head was white as winter's snow !
And once I mind me, long ago,
There was a parent who did save
His lifeless son, the young, the brave,

And beauteous, from the tempest wave,
Where none might aid, and made his grave
Upon the unknown, homeless wild,
Where they were cast — his only child —
Secure and deeply in the sand,
 Beyond the keen hyena's scent,
 And marked the place where lay impent
 The dead with fitting moniment —
And o'er himself kept such command
The while, that not a single groan
 Escaped him, not a sign of wo !
 Yet thenceforth walked the earth as though
He were its denizen alone,
 A prey to desolation ! —

So

With Hubart ; from her pallid brow
He brushed the sweat, and smoothed her hair ;
And lifting her with gentlest care,
Conveyed her lightly to her bed,
And raised the pillow for her head,
Deft as the mother when at night
 She hollows out a cosey nest

For her weaned first-born, and despite
Her anxious fears, leaves it to rest
Alone and unattended save

By guardian angels! —

Brief in speech,

But definite as brief, he gave

His orders, tranquil as the leech
Long practiced, working for his fee —

Applying every remedy

Suggested by the sympathy

Of Jethro's good dame; and although

Long hours — how wearisome, how slow!

Dragged by, and she remained as chill

And blank as at the outset, still

He faltered not — nor meantime swerved

A moment from his charge his thought,

Save once, and then old Carl, unnerved

And crushed with the disaster, caught

His eye — “ Here is some sad mistake

Which I may solve, good Carl! ” he spake —

“ At fitting time; perchance too late

To balk the sad decrees of fate —

But surely so ; and she is mine
By human law, as by divine —
Mine, mine alone — unless the bride
Of death ! ”

No further words were said
Upon the matter — none replied ;
And thus dragged on the moments dread ;
While still the elemental strife
Went on without. But when her life
Came back, as come it did at length,
Though faint and flickering, then his cheek
In turn grew pale, and waned his strength
To helplessness ! —

But wherefore eke
Our tale out like a prairie stream
That flows for months to reach the sea ?
At length she spoke coherently —
“ Where am I, Hubart ? Did I dream ? —
Methought an angel came to me
To say, mistakingly I grieved,
That good old Carl had been deceived
By specious tales — and I might be

Your own true wife, and yet not break
The laws of Heaven ! — all a mistake ! ”

“ My own true wife ! — none dare gainsay ! ”

Cried Hubart, springing to her side,

“ You *are* my own, my lawful bride ! —

But sleep now ; and be satisfied

With the full tale to-morrow.”

“ Nay ! ”

She urged imploringly, “ avow

It all, the worst, the best — and now ” —

And old Carl’s eager eyes expressed

As deep concern in this request !

“ Then be it so ; ” said Hubart, “ well,

You know the race of Walsyngham ;

When my grandsire, old Hubart, fell

’Neath the redoubts at Amsterdam,

It scarcely needs that I relate

The escheat, titles, and estate

Fell to the eldest son and line,

Then gone abroad to Palestine

Upon some mission of the Court ;
Nor how that son came to his end
In combat with his warmest friend —
A duel, growing out of sport,
Like many another such affair.

His poor wife, crushed with bitter grief,
Next, in the grave found a relief
From trouble, and their babe and heir,
A *female*, in its nurse's care,
Home bound, departed from the Bay
Of Scandaroon — it well may be
With this same Jewess Désirée ;
The ship was wrecked, but from the sea
The babe was rescued — need I say
Confounded by good Carl with me
Thenceforth ? The case is more than plain !
It died soon after ; here again
Were facts to lead our friend astray !

My own existence, sooth to own !
Was at that time but little known ;
My father as a second son

Had married secretly, to shun
Thereby the old earl's ire, who held
The match beneath him, though the spouse
Could number in her line, of eld,
More chiefs and warriors than our house
Could claim, by scores ! But she was poor,
A sin sufficient to ignore
The union ! — I was some months old
When this fair infant cousin died —
And there were persons who denied
The child's decease, so I have heard,
Foes to our influence, who averred
My father had in good time told
The specious story, that he might
Thereby the more securely hold
Estate and titles, mine of right
As being the elder brother's heir ;
But proof abundant of the sex,
At hand, of the deceased was there !
And he was quite too proud to vex
Himself about the slander, so
It was forgotten long ago ! ”

Meanwhile had Carl and Hester hung
Upon each word dropped from his tongue,
With breathless hush, and both at once
Burst forth in vehement response
Of gratulation, and of praise
To Heaven !

“ Thus wondrous are the ways
Of Providence,” said she, while tears
Suffused her eyes — “ and so the fears
And troubles which have hung for years
About us, from their mystery

All the more dread, have flown for aye ! —
And my poor father — now I see
How dire the thought that night and day
Hath dogged him, taunting him away !
The wonder is he was not driven
Long since to madness !

“ But high Heaven !
What were my fate had Carl’s surmise
Been truthful ! ” And she hid her eyes
In her crossed hands, and shuddering turned
Away ; while Carl, who madly yearned

To hear each most minute detail,
And half demented with excess
Of this unlooked-for happiness,
Rushed on him with a tempest hail
Of questions — as 'twere every side
At once — nor would be satisfied
Till Hubart o'er and o'er had tried
To explain each incident most slight —
Especially of that wild night
Of wreck, when from the billow's whirl
(As he a child had often heard
The tale) they saved the baby girl —
The old man treasuring every word ;
How the waves thundered to the reef,
And pausing, for a moment brief,
Like crouching tigers ere they leap
Upon their prey, with mighty sweep
Sprang forward, clinging to the steep,
With their lithe, searching fingers wound
In every crevice — then a bound
Adown the crag, and all below
Was one wild whirl of hissing snow,

On which went poppling to and fro
A bundle, dancing like a cork
 Around the boiling basin — such
At least, had been his nurse's talk —
 And when from the rude breakers' clutch
Was won the parcel, therein wrapped
 Secure, the infant girl was found,
Composed as though it had but napped
A moment — snatched thus from the wave,
Ere summer fled, to find a grave
 Beneath the grassy burial mound.

CHAPTER XI.

'Twas planned that Hubart should in brief,
These facts to Hester's father write,
And that their friend, the Indian chief,
Should with the note at dawn of light
Depart — and ne'er had Hester known
Such depth of joy, as when alone
Thereafter, with her white arms thrown
Round Hubart's neck, she marked him trace
The scroll! And though about her face,
In many a twirl and tangled tress
Dishevelled fell her glossy hair,
And though in sorry plight her dress,
Ne'er had she seemed more passing fair
To him, while thus upon his chair
She hung, and watched his every look!

Sooth ! had the tempest which still shook
With angry clutch the cabin, wracked
And piecemeal torn away the roof,
'Twere doubtful but the spell had proof
Been to a knowledge of the fact !

Night paled — morn kissed the earth, and both
Blushed crimson ! And the tempest, loth
To quit the contest, muttering drew
His forces northward far away,
Cloud after cloud, till the array
Was gone from sight ; and rising day
Burst forth in glory, O, how new
And beautiful ! the air all balm,
The deep, deep sky so softly blue,
The atmosphere so wholly calm,
The dullest could but feel the charm
In some sort.

Yet that brilliant morn
Looked on a scene of havoc dread !
Prostrated fences, trees upturn,
Or shivered limb from limb, and spread

O'er ridge and slope ; and o'er the field,
The corn and grain, the promised yield
Of harvest, which so lately shook
In every breath its trestled gold,
Ripe for the sickle, 'scattered — rolled
In matted swaths to every nook
And glen, wherever it might lurch ;
While the more supple elm and birch,
That had through all the strife maintained
Their stand, exhausted, wrenched, and strained,
Drooped, with their long arms listless hung
About them, like tired guards among
The wrecks of battle !

Sad indeed,
The scene that claimed old Jethro's heed ;
But he, good man, gave Heaven the praise,
That though thus hopelessly bereft
Of all his crops of wheat and maize,
His sheltering mansion still was left,
And of the previous harvest's grain
Enough, with prudence, would remain
To last till autumn came again !

Herein was true philosophy,

If nothing more ! If mankind nurse
Remembrance of adversity,

It but the more augments the curse ;
And heaven turns not with every freak
Of adverse or propitious fate ;

'Tis what we have, not what we seek,
Should be the question — heaven's a state !

'Tis what we are at present, not
How will the future mend our lot ;

In vain we long, in vain we wait,
In vain self-immolated bow ;

Ours is the present — cultivate
The paradise at hand, the now ;
The future ever will remain
The future, howsoe'er we strain
To overtake it — and we dwell
On earth at choice, in heaven or hell !

This may be counted heresy

In some sort ! Every truth at first
Is such, and brave and timid flee

Its presence, as a thing accursed !
For all, 'tis fact ! Still there are those
Would deem it impious to oppose
Despair — those who to suffering cling,
As if expectant thence to wring

Perfection ; courting an excess
Of pain — as gnats which sometimes sting
Their life away when rankled — this

By some deemed Christian, is no less
The pagan's patent road to bliss,
The platform of his funeral pyre,
Of every scourge to calm the ire

Of his fierce gods ! But we digress.

Perchance it scarcely needs be said
That Jethro's guests, the newly wed
And good old Carl, changed their design
Of journeying further east ! In fine,
They turned towards their island home.

Here they arrived as evening close
Was tinging with its smile the dome
Of the deep heavens — ye may suppose

In blither mood than when the shore
So late they fled!

But one thing more,
Did the young bride need to secure
The sum of earthly happiness—
Her father's presence and caress ;
Nor wanted long — for to their view
Just now appears a fleet canoe
Around Quohaga's isle, propelled
By two athletic men, and held
Directly for the landing place ;
And in the supple form and grace
Of one, her eyes were quick to see
Her noble parent.

It was he !
The Indian runner on his way
Had met him. Flashed the snowy spray
From their quick blades — and soon he pressed
His daughter to his throbbing breast.
His great dread had forever flown —
His happiness appeared complete !
Nor was he less o'erjoyed to greet

Her spouse — had Hubart's pulses run
With blood entitled to a throne,
He had not been less proud to own
The daring youngster for his son !

But little further need be penned
To bring our history to its end.
A life upon the lonely sea
And in the forest solitude
Had grown to a necessity
Almost, as 'twere, with Ravenswood ;
And all continued at the isle,
And two years ran their rounds ; meanwhile,
A fair-haired, winsome, chubby elf,
The lesser transcript of herself,
Came opportunely to beguile
The life of Hester, which had been,
It may be, otherwise serene ;
To tediousness. — But Hubart's ear
Was ever all alert to hear
News of the mother-land ! 'Twas plain
He longed to see its shores again,

And try his talents in a sphere
Of wider action ; and at last

He spake his thoughts — and one fair day
In autumn came a ship, and cast

Her anchor in the inner bay ;

And when at morn she bore away,
They were on board, sire, wife, and child,

Embarked for home — and nevermore
Returned they to the lonely wild !

But old Carl, who some months before
Had wedded Marjory, became

The island's sole possessor ; there
He lived in honorable fame

For years, and ready aye to share
His hospitalities with all

Who in his way might chance to fall,
Or rich or poor — and to the end

Remained the red man's warmest friend ! —
He died at last — dame Marjory

Soon followed ; and their grassy graves
Upon a wild bluff, by the sea,

Oft sprinkled by the tempest's spray —

(Beneath a lone and lofty tree,
That marked the spot far o'er the waves)
Were known until a recent day.

As to Otraska, but a week
Had Hester been a wedded bride,
Ere she had left the isle to seek
The wigwams of her kin, beside
The distant Moosehead's lonely wave,
Where she abode ; but every spring
It was her wont to seek the grave
Of her lost lover, there to sing
Alone the death-chant, and to deck
The tranquil spot with forest flowers —
And each time spent at least some hours
With Hester, ere that friend for aye
Had gone. Till once in an essay
To cross the swollen Kennebec
In freshet, she was borne away
Amidst the wild debris and wreck ;
Ne'er heard of after !

Poor, bereft,

And lonely maiden ! None were left
To seek her — to investigate
The circumstances of her fate.
And if they had sought, what avail ?
None now were left, none, to bewail !
Gone to the mansions of the blest —
Yet truer heart, we will attest,
Ne'er beat in faithful woman's breast !

NOTES.

NOTES.

The name of Casco which it bears,
Importing in the Indian tongue
A resting place from toils and cares. — p. 13.

An aged Indian of the Penobscot tribe, of whom I inquired, gave me to understand that the name by which his people knew this beautiful bay meant "a resting place."

None was more beauteous than Chebeague. — p. 14.

Chebeague — the Indian name of the largest and most productive of the islands in Casco Bay. It has now several hundred inhabitants.

So Knox long years thereafter, when
America with Albion's might,
Was pitched in desperation's fight,
With thunder voice controlled his men. — p. 16.

The American general Knox, in the war of the Revolution, was famed for the strength of his voice, as well as for his unflinching bravery.

Dost know, dear father, of the land
Whence tower those mighty mountains? — p. 39.

The mountains here referred to are the White Mountains of New Hampshire. They are distant from Portland more than seventy miles on an air line (about one hundred by the several routes of travel); but when the atmosphere is clear, may be distinctly seen from that city and other points on Casco Bay. Our tale is supposed to date back to a time previous to their exploration. They were, however, visited by the settlers as early as 1632.

The Indians believed these mountains to be the abodes of invisible spirits, who controlled the winds and tempests; and at times they offered sacrifices to, and worshipped these beings. Similar superstitions obtained with the whites;—and there are those, at the present day, who cling to a belief in these supernatural agencies, and tell of the wonderful experiences of their ancestors in regard to them. It is in reference to these superstitions that I make the chief Squanto turn away from Hester as if with dread, when asked by her for information concerning them (see foot of page 39).

Wherever I have referred to them in this work, it is by the name of Wampanhegan. The aged Indian, referred to in the first of these notes, informed me that in the modern idiom of the Penobscot tribe, they are called "Wampanhegan Ouithna." By the early historians of the region, they were sometimes denominated "Waumbeket Methna"—and the similarity of the terms seems to indicate the same etymological basis for them.

Inbound perchance for Richmond Isle.—p. 57.

This island—situated to the south of Cape Elizabeth, and less than a mile therefrom—in the early occupation of the region, was the principal trading station on the coast eastward of Massachusetts Bay. It was variously known as Richman's, Richmond, and Richmond's Island. At the present day, it is

cultivated as a farm; and except in the mementoes which the plow occasionally turns up, bears no indications of its former commercial importance. One of these mementoes, plowed up a few years ago, was an earthen pot, containing gold and silver coins, some of which are still in possession of my esteemed friend, J. M. Cummings, Esq., the present proprietor of the island.

* * The island of the Cave,
The beauteous Indian Quohago. — p. 72.

Diamond (formerly called Hog) island is here meant. By one of the early explorers of the region, it is stated that the Indian name of the group of islands in which this is included, or of the sound leading to them, was Quohago or Cohago. The early settlers of the region were disposed to contract and modify the Indian names of localities so as best to suit their English tongue; and it is not improbable that the designation Hog, which the island so long bore, was the result of a change from Quohago. By an easy transition the change would be made. An arm of the sea between Harpswell and Phippsburg still bears the name of *Quohog* Bay.

There is room, too, for belief that Casco, the present name of the whole bay between Cape Elizabeth and the mouth of the Kennebec River, is but a modification of the same word.

The name of the beautiful island, to which the lines at the head of this note refer (Diamond), was given some twenty years since by a party of young men from Portland, who visited it specially for the purpose, the author being one of the number. With speeches, songs, and sentiments, and a copious libation of wine to the genius loci, the new name was inducted.

The solitary more-rain hushed
In the deep glens his minstrelsy. — p. 73.

“More-rain” — a name applied in some localities, by farmers, to the Wood-Thrush (the *Turdus Melodus* of Wilson), probably from the fact that it is most unremitting in its song when the sky is cloudy, or the rain is descending.

Wilson says of this species of bird (considered by many the most beautiful songster of all the feathered tribe of America):

“Even in dark, wet, and gloomy weather, when scarce a single chirp is heard from any other bird, the clear notes of the Wood-Thrush thrill through the dropping woods from morning till night; and it may truly be said that the sadder the day, the sweeter is his song.”

And o'er his soul
Scenes of elysian beauty stole. — p. 84.

In this passage I have endeavored to portray such sensations as are said to be experienced by persons drowning.

'Twas no chimera Brutus saw
Stride through his tent. — p. 90.

Plutarch states that while Brutus sat quietly reading in his tent near Sardis, the ghost of Julius Cæsar appeared suddenly before him, and declared to him that he was his evil genius, and that he would meet him at Philippi — the scene of the battle where the defenders of Roman liberty were fatally overthrown.

No fleshly monk
From whom the imperial Russian shrunk. — p. 90.

There was much talk in St. Petersburg concerning a supernatural visitation which the Emperor Nicholas experienced,

some few months before his death—and the matter made no little stir in some of the European newspapers, whose speculations in regard to it were copied quite extensively by the American press. As the story runs, the Emperor was seated alone in his apartment, which had but one means of access, and that in charge of some of his most trusty guards, when a monk in sable attire appeared before him, and denounced his schemes of ambition, and prophesied wo upon himself and his kingdom if he abandoned not his intents. The Emperor sprang at the intruder, to clasp only the air, and rushed out, sword in hand, exclaiming “The monk! the monk!” But the soldiers declared upon their oaths that no one had passed in or out.

No echoes did the footfalls wake
Of that mysterious, shadowy train,
Whereof the long-haired Samian spake.—p. 90.

Pythagoras, who, it is supposed, had his birth at Samos, was by the ancients sometimes designated as the “long-haired Samian.” The accounts of his experiences in regard to spiritual attendants are extant in the annals of his time, which have come down to us.

Worthy the name of *Diamond Cove*.—p. 96.

A sheltered inlet, at the north-eastern extremity of Diamond Island, Casco Bay, still preserved in all its primitive wealth of woods, rocks, and wild flowers—a place much frequented by pic-nic parties from Portland, and noted through all the region round for its picturesque beauties. It probably takes its name from the abundance of the crystals of quartz which were formerly there found—in the parlance of the islanders called diamonds.

Far away
O'er many streams, there is a sea
Blue as the summer skies. — p. 109.

Moosehead Lake, the source of the Kennebec River, in the northwesterly part of the State of Maine, is here intended. The region around it is still unsettled, and is famous for the abundance of its game, as is the lake for its superior trout.

In morning's calm the maskalunge
And red trout love to leap and plunge. — p. 110.

The maskalunge, or maskalongé is a large species of pike, sometimes weighing sixty or eighty pounds, by some said to be found at present only in the great lakes, and the waters of the St. Lawrence basin, but I have been assured that it is still to be caught in Lake Massawippi in Canada; but it is not reckoned a fish of the Moosehead's waters. The name in the Canadian French patois (*masque longé*) means long head or long snout.

And was it not to-day
We were to seek Merconnig stream. — p. 112.

Merconnig, or Merriconeag was the Indian name of the peninsula of Harpswell, which is some six or eight miles north-easterly of Chebeague Island. The stream here alluded to, is the narrow inlet on the south-easterly side of the peninsula, which penetrates the main land several miles, and nearly intersects the Androscoggin river at West Bath. It now, I believe, forms a part of what is called "Merriconig Sound."

The flattered lord
Of heroes of the festive board. — p. 118.

Charles II., after the overthrow of the "Cavaliers" at Wor-

cester, fled to France, took up his residence at Versailles, and spent his time in dissipation.

“ by the holy fount
Of Zemzem! — p. 138.

A fountain by this name is said to exist at Mecca — and the Mahomedans profess to believe that it is the same that, through Divine interposition, was discovered to Hagar, when she wandered in the wilderness, after being abandoned by Abraham. The descendants of Mahomet and other Mahomedan rulers, drink of its waters as a religious observance.

That shout! 'tis not the muezzin's cry. — p. 148.

A muezzin is a person who cries the hour of prayer in Mahomedan countries — generally from the lofty galleries of the minarets which are attached to the mosques.

They entered on a rough defile
'Midst beetling precipices riven,
And rent, and torn, in every shape. — p. 155.

In this and succeeding passages I have endeavored to give true pictures of the scenery in the desert of Sinai, and the sterile regions bordering the northerly portions of the Red Sea — as I have gathered them from various travelers. Miss Harriet Martineau, who made the journey from Bissateen to Sinai, and thence to Akabah, in her journal kept on the occasion (published under the title of “Eastern Life”), gives graphic descriptions of her experiences in these particulars. Speaking of a defile in the peninsula of Sinai, called Wady-el-Ain (the Valley of the Spring), she says :

“ We found ourselves in a gorge, compared with whose summits, Sinai and Horeb appeared almost insignificant. Every

winding displayed something finer than we had before met with; and at last we came upon a scene to which we remembered no parallel. We all knew Switzerland, and we all agreed that not even there had we seen anything so magnificent as this Wady-el-Ain. * * * Deep shadows were flung across, and blazing sunshine poured down between."

And again, speaking of the rich coloring of the precipices, she says:

"The rocks were the most diversified I ever saw. I noted them on the spot as being black, green, crimson, lilac, maroon, yellow, golden, and white."

While green,
Broad boughed, and knurled with rampant life,
The tamarisk and palm upsprung. — p. 157.

Travelers, in alluding to the botany of this region, speak of the palm and tamarisk as the trees generally met with where trees can find sustenance enough to grow.

At times there seemed to swell
A chime as of some vesper bell!
Familiar to the Briton's ear
It seemed. — p. 166.

It is well known that such illusory sounds as are here referred to, are often heard on the desert. In "Passages of Eastern Travel," published in Harper's Magazine for August, 1856, the writer, referring to his approach to Luxor, says: "I know that on that Saturday night, I heard the church bells of my own home sounding over the tossing waves of the Nile. Yes, I heard them. I, too, laughed, when I read in the books of travels of others that they heard such sounds on the desert, but I did not laugh now, for I have learned

the truth of those sounds. * * * They sounded sweetly — clearly, and I sprang to the door of the cabin, and out into the starry night, and leaned my head forward to listen to their melody. Soft, soft, and sweet they came over the swift river; clear, rich, and full. There could be no mistaking them."

Perhaps these sounds might have come from the sand of the desert being ruffled by the wind. Hugh Miller and other eminent naturalists describe at least three localities where similar sounds are produced by disturbing the sand. One of these is the beach of a small bay in one of the Hebride Islands, called the *Bay of Laig* — another, *Reg Rawan*, in Afghanistan, about forty miles from Cabul; the third, *Jabel Nakous*, about three miles from the shores of the Gulf of Suez, in Arabia.

Jabel Nakous, or the "Mountain of the Bell," is perhaps the most remarkable of the three. It has been known, says Hugh Miller, "for many ages by the wild Arab of the desert, that there rose at times from this hill, a strange, inexplicable music. As he leads his camel past in the heat of the day, a sound like the first low tones of an Æolian harp stirs the hot, breezeless air. It swells louder and louder in progressive undulations, till at length the dry baked earth seems to vibrate under foot, and the startled animal snorts and rears, and struggles to break away."

Mr. Gray of University College, Oxford, according to Sir David Brewster, visited it, and describes the noises he heard, but which he was unable to trace to their producing cause, as "beginning with a low, continuous murmuring sound, which seemed to rise beneath his feet, but which gradually changed into pulsations as it became louder, so as to resemble the striking of a clock."

For a full account of the places where these remarkable

phenomena have been observed, see Chap. 4th of the "Cruise of the Betsey," by Hugh Miller.

I have no authority for stating that these sounds prognosticate the gale known as the kamsin, but it requires no great stretch of the imagination to suppose that when smitten suddenly by the wind, the desert sands may produce them.

But for a peerless Almeh, who
Rushed to the wreck-lined shore, and drew
Thy cold corse from the billows' strife,
And by such stress of heavenly art
As only Allah could impart,
At length hath won thee back to life! — p. 169.

In a popular work on Egypt, published in London in 1839, now before me, it is stated, that at Cairo, the name by which female singers are designated, signifies a learned woman, (almeh), and "many of them are not unworthy of the title, being possessed of knowledge and accomplishments independent of their musical acquirements, and are sometimes employed as private tutors in the harems of the rich."

For ne'er did moonshid's tale express
Such form of faultless symmetry,
Such matchless grace and loveliness. — p. 170.

In the popular work on Egypt, before referred to, the writer, in describing one of the public feasts at Cairo, alludes to the booths where various exhibitions were going on, and says: "At one end of the ring were four moonshids, (singers of poetry), and with them a player on a kind of flute called *náy*."

Brow lucid as the henneh's flower. — p. 170.

The hennah, "beloved of woman," bears a small but beautifully white flower, having an agreeable odor. From the leaves of the plant, the Egyptians make a preparation where-with the women dye their hands and feet, producing a permanent orange color.

Hair whose glossy jet
Would make the kohl itself seem pale. — p. 170.

The kohl is a black dye with which Egyptian women tinge their eye-lids in order to heighten the effect of their already black eyes. The dye most approved has for its basis a lead ore brought from Persia. It is laid on with a small bodkin of wood, ivory, or metal; hence the oriental poets have said that "the mountains of Ispahan have been worn away with a bodkin."

Bismillah! but thus much can tell. — p. 171.

All the chapters of the Koran begin with the word Bismillah, meaning "In the name of God."

Hers is the santon's gift to see
The wonders of futurity. — p. 171.

Santon — a kind of Moslem priest, who formerly followed in the track of armies, sometimes prophesying — and was regarded by the more ignorant as a saint.

——— A tarry short
At ancient Ezion Geber's fort. — p. 175.

A fortified place spoken of in Biblical writings, at the head of that arm of the Red Sea now known as the Gulf of Akabah.

Northward wends
The pass El Ghor, adust, and wide,

And weary, walled on either side
With frowning ridges. — p. 175.

In Stephens's "Incidents of Travel" I find the following description of the Wady El Ghor :

"Standing near the shore of this northern extremity of the Red Sea, I saw before me an immense sandy valley, which, without the aid of geological science, to the eye of common observation and reason, had once been the bottom of a sea or bed of a river. This dreary valley, extending far beyond the reach of the eye, * * * is the great valley of El Ghor, extending from the shores of the Elanitic Gulf to the southern extremity of the Lake Asphaltites or the Dead Sea; and it was manifest by landmarks of Nature's own providing, that over that plain those seas had once mingled their waters; or perhaps more probably, before the cities of the plain had been consumed, * * * the Jordan had here rolled its waters."

Beneath a lofty colonade
In ruined Petra's midnight shade. — p. 183.

* * * * *

While ruined palace, temple, shrine,
From the eternal mountain hewn. — p. 185.

Petra is supposed to be the ancient capital of the Edomites, who, as the Scripture says, made their "dwellings in the rock." It hardly need be said here, that its ruins are among the most wonderful in the world.

The little rill
Which 'midst the oleanders wound. — p. 201.

The plants growing in the gorge of Petra, and some of the ravines of the Wady El Ghor, are oleanders, dwarf acacias, scarlet anemones, red amaryllis, wild oats, red poppies, broom,

wild fig, mallow, tamarisk, blue forget-me-not, and wild geranium.

Miss Martineau mentions "thickets of oleanders" about Petra; and Bayard Taylor speaks of the abundance of scarlet poppies, in some of the more mountainous parts of Syria, sweeping up the acclivities so as to make them appear as though they were on fire.

From his hiding place
Among the dwarf acacias stole
The amazed gazelle, with timid pace
And ears raised; and from gulch and knoll,
Where the thick, fiery poppies glowed
Like living coals, the partridge strode. — p. 215.

In Stephens's "Incidents of Travel," describing his approach to Petra, he says, "It was a beautiful afternoon; gazelles were playing in the valleys, and partridges running wild up the mountains." Other travelers also casually refer to these species of game as abundant in the neighboring regions.

But oft within are sumptuous halls,
Bedight with every garniture
And gild of ornament that art
And wealth of fancy can impart,
Or untold opulence procure. — p. 226.

Describing Damascus, Bayard Taylor says, "We visited the other day the houses of some of the richest Jews, * * The exteriors of the houses are mean; but after threading a narrow passage, we emerged into a court rivaling in profusion of ornament and rich contrast of colors one's early idea of the Palace of Aladdin. The floors and fountains are all of mosaic; the arches of the liwan glitter with gold, and the walls

bewilder the eye with the intricacy of their adornments. In the first house, we were received by the family in a room of precious marbles, with niches in the walls, resembling grottoes of silver stalactites. The cushions of the divan were of the richest silk, and a chandelier of Bohemian crystal hung from the ceiling. Silver narghilehs were brought to us, and coffee was served on heavy silver zerfs." — See "Lands of the Saracen."

Damascus! what a tingling zest
Of romance, even to the name
Pertains! — p. 231.

Delicious clime! its proverbs say
Three things can charm dull care away —
Three — water, verdure, and the grace
That sparkles in a lovely face!
These can it boast. — p. 232.

Damascus is situated in the midst of a beautiful plain, with the Libanus chain of mountains on one side, and the desert on the other. The Emperor Julian styled it, "the eye of all the East, the sacred and most magnificent Damascus." It has been captured in turn by King David, Tiglath Pileser of Assyria, Sennacherib, the Generals of Alexander, the Romans, the Saracens, Egyptian Mamelukes, Turks, etc.

As to modern Damascus, Bayard Taylor in his *Lands of the Saracen*, says: "When you behold Damascus from the Salahiyyeh, the last slope of the Anti-Lebanon, it is the realization of all that you have dreamed of oriental splendor. It is Beauty carried to the Sublime, as I have felt when overlooking some boundless forest of palms within the tropics."

Its Barrada

With all its wandering wealth of streams,
And ever green and blossoming bowers. — p. 232.

The Barrada is the ancient Pharpar. "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" 2 Kings, v. 12.

"In a terrible gorge, the river Barrada forces its way to the plain, and its waters, divided into twelve different channels, make all between you and those blue island hills of the desert, one great garden, the boundaries of which your vision can barely distinguish. Its longest diameter cannot be less than twenty miles. You look down on a world of foliage, and fruit, and blossoms, whose hue by contrast with the barren mountains, and the yellow rim of the desert which incloses it, seems brighter than all other gardens in the world. Through its center, following the course of the river, lies Damascus; a line of white walls topped with domes, and towers, and tall minarets, winding away for miles through the green sea."—*Bayard Taylor's "Lands of the Saracen."*

The Barrada gushes from a ravine of the Anti-Libanus chain of hills, and its waters, after flowing through the plains of Damascus, are lost in a shallow lake on the borders of the desert.

How replete

With witching melody the song

Of the weird bulbul.—p. 235.

Bulbul—the Arabic name for nightingale.

What time the ruthless Tamerlane

Swept Syria with his demon horde

Of horse, and gave to fire and sword

The city and its countless souls.—p. 239.

Damascus was besieged by Tamerlane, otherwise called Timour, A. D. 1400, who overthrew the city, and put the inhabitants to the sword.

As if a host of wandering gholes

Were on their rounds in quest of prey. — p. 240.

Ghole or ghoul — a fabled demon, who, among Eastern nations, was supposed to prey upon human bodies.

I've at Wescustogo a friend. — p. 269.

What is now Yarmouth, in early times was called Wescustogo, and the name extended to, or was derived from, the stream now known as Royal's River.

Pomola hath his wigwam fled. — p. 283.

Pomola was an Indian spirit, whose abode was fixed, we believe, on Mt. Katahdin, whence he went forth in storm and tempest — not on the *Wampanhegan Ouithna*, or White Mountains.

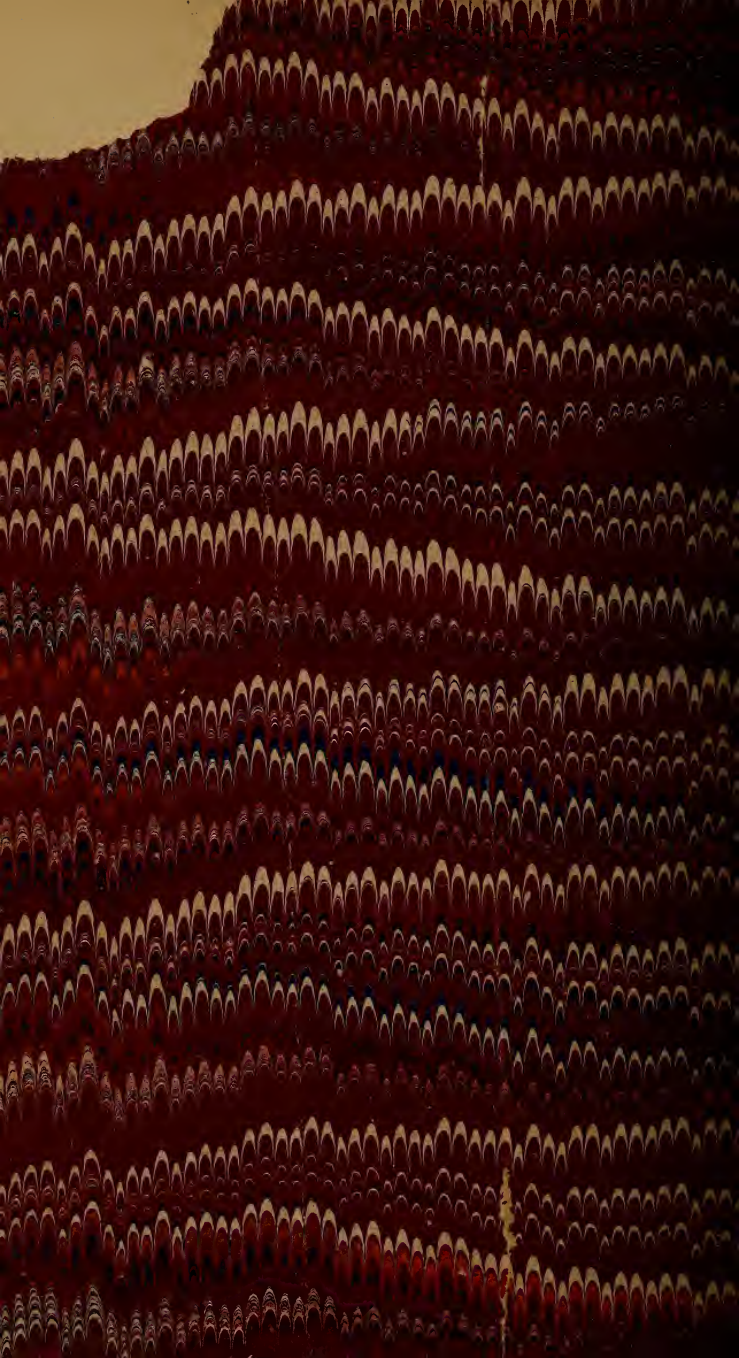
If 'twere not that the bridge were gone

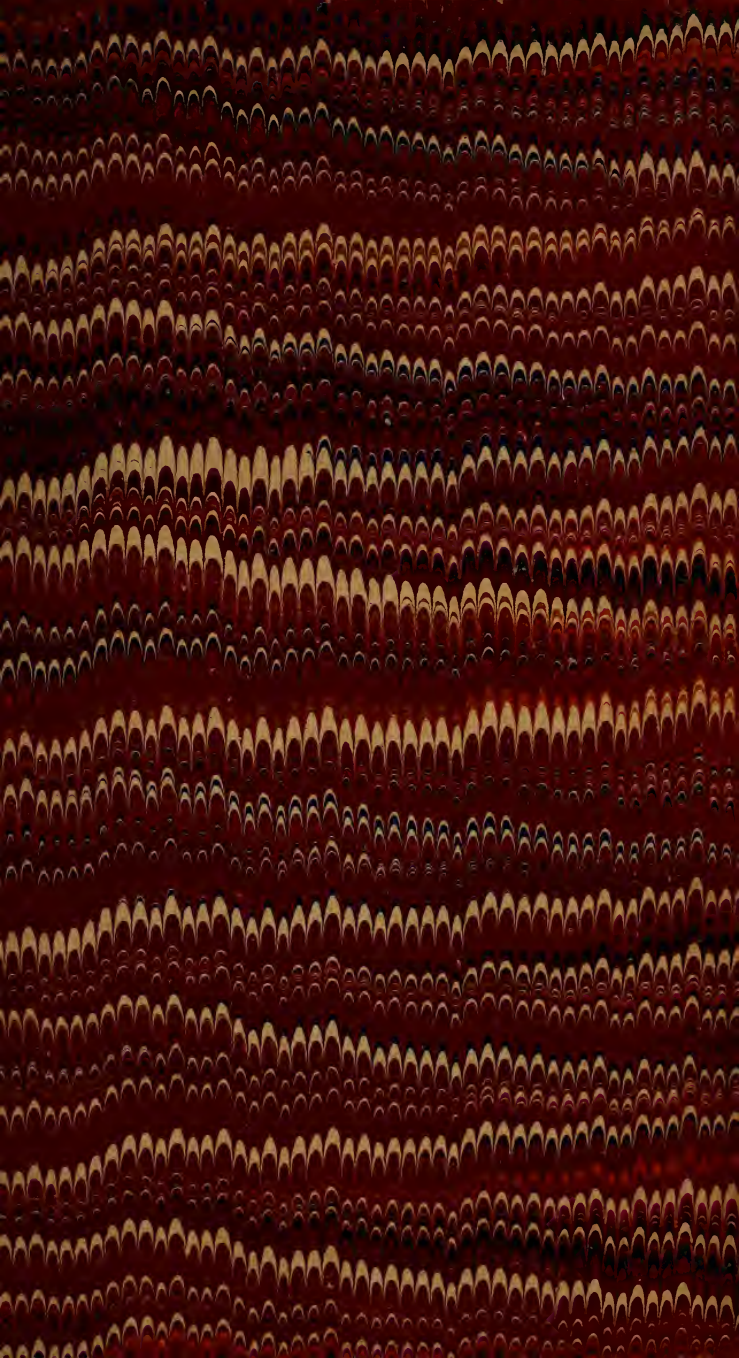
On yonder roaring stream 'twixt here

And Harraseeket. — p. 292.

Harraseeket was the Indian name of a district now included in Freeport; and the name still attaches to a stream or inlet of that locality. The "stream" above referred to was the Wescustogo, or Royal's River.

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